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Beyond *the* Rainbow

The Autobiography of Leola Jex Freshwater Curtis

First Edition

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Foreword

by Chas Hathaway

My family and I were just finishing another fun-filled trip to Grandma Curtis' house, complete with a fresh bowl of vanilla ice cream, a vigorous game of hide-and-seek with the cousins, and bags of fresh garden vegetables to take home.

Everything had gone perfect, until I saw something that to my naïve twelve-year-old heart may have been one of the biggest tragedies I'd ever witnessed. Throughout the day, we'd excitedly watched a young bird, fresh from the nest, practicing its new wings on the grass in the yard. Now it rested, chirping happily behind Grandma's colorful flower garden. In the flurry of our preparations to go home, the door was left open just long enough for the cat to slip out of the house and come face to face with any cat's golden opportunity—a flightless bird.

I watched the encounter in shock, unable to pull my eyes away as the otherwise innocent cat snatched the unsuspecting bird

so quickly that it's song still rested on my ears as it went silent, never to sing again.

I was so shaken that I covered my face and fled the scene. I crossed the yard and hid in the afternoon shadows behind shed, unable to contain my sobs. I couldn't get the image of the poor, dying bird from my mind. Things like that shouldn't happen. Not ever.

Then Grandma came around the corner. She immediately put her arm around me and spoke softly. She didn't say it wasn't something to worry about. She didn't try to tell me I was too old to cry. She didn't even try to stop my sobs. She just held me, and shared with me some stories of when she was young, and how she knew how much it can hurt to see a sweet little animal suffer. More than anything else, she loved me. She understood.

Grandma was sensitive to things like that. She could see things that others couldn't. She knew when there was a need.

A few days later, Grandma sent me a letter in the mail, sharing some special experiences from her own life that touch me every bit as much now as they did back then. She told about an experience she'd had, after being hospitalized, and nearly losing her life, that strengthened her understanding that there is life beyond this, and that she knew for sure that there are angels and a Father in Heaven who loves us. “Even little birds don't stay dead,” she wrote, “I know that now.”

Grandma always had a closeness to the veil. She caught glimpses beyond it, and several times met with loved ones who had died long before.

That knowledge became invaluable to me when, only a short time later, she experienced a stroke that partially paralyzed her, so that a little over a year later, she also crossed that veil in death.

"Even little birds don't stay dead," I reminded myself, "I know that now." Neither do loving Grandmas.

I don't think her gift died with her. Since her death, family and friends have felt her close. Even those of us who don't have her gift to see beyond are influenced by her spirit, her love, and her continued prayers on our behalf. And all of us are influenced by her written words.

With the exception of very minor grammatical, spelling, and tense adjustments, this volume is written entirely in her words, collected from her stories, letters, journals, writings, notebooks, and recordings. As more of her writings are uncovered and added to this book, new editions will be released, providing a fuller, richer look into the beautifully simple and remarkable life of this incredible woman.

My hope is that her influence will continue to touch lives forever. Grandma was a writer. She wasn't afraid to dream big. There were few things that brought her greater joy than seeing her words in print, and have them touch the lives of others. But when it came down to it, her greatest joy came from her family—

her husband, her children, and her Father in Heaven. As a fellow writer, I understand the struggle to make time to write. Had she not put first things first in her life, perhaps she would have had a book published in her lifetime—maybe even many books. But she did something far better. She lived a life worth recording. She lived for the people around her. She demonstrated love in every way she knew how, and she continues to do so today. She raised an incredible family.

And that is a much bigger accomplishment.

I love you, Grandma.

- Chas

Chapter 1: Earliest Memories

My parents are Leo Rowland Freshwater and Susan Catherine Jex. They named me after my father. If I had been a boy, I would have been called Leo. Then they gave me Jex for a middle name as that was my mother's maiden name.

I was their first child. They were married September 17, 1913 in the Salt Lake Temple.

My parents are wonderful people. If I'd had the chance to choose them before birth, I could not have chosen better people. I love them dearly, and I consider it one of my choicest blessings, to have been born into their home, to be reared in such love, to have been taught the Gospel from birth. They are the kind Christ referred to as "salt of the earth", valiant, loyal, steadfast... Their good example has strengthened my own testimony many times.

I was born in my Grandmother Jex's home in Spanish Fork, Utah, on the first day of October 1914. It still seems as if I remember being wrapped in warm blankets, and being welcomed and loved by many relatives. Maybe it only seems that way

because babies were always considered as being very special persons in the Jex family. One thing sure, I was a wanted and loved child, and I've always considered that as one of my greatest blessings. I never, ever felt left out, or not wanted.

My grandparents, Richard Moses Jex and his wife Louisa Watling Jex, had come to Utah for the Gospel's sake just before my mother was born. My grandfather passed away when I was only about four years old, so I don't remember too much about him, except that he liked to tease me and had a good sense of humor. He was also a stalwart in the church. He had been a convert.

In February of 1917, on the 27th, my sister Ruby was born. We were always the best of friends. I don't ever remember any trouble ever coming between us.

My first clear memory is of pushing my little sister in her baby buggy. It was in the house. Mom was nearby. She fixed a little bottle of milk for Ruby. She told me to not drop the baby's bottle because it was glass and it would break. I remember it was a flat looking bottle with a black nipple on it (what it really was was an old whiskey bottle that my mom had cleaned out good so she could use it. We didn't have nice plastic bottles then). At first I pushed her back and forth carefully while my mom watched. She left the room for a minute and I gave the buggy such a hard shove it bumped into something and tipped over, spilling out the baby and her bottle. I ran into the other room screaming, "Come quick, come quick. "The baby bottle tipped out!"

She came running to her screaming child. I was just afraid I might have broken the bottle and soiled the milk. She was quite

upset with me that I worried about the bottle instead of the baby. I got scolded, and Ruby got loved, and I cried, too, and wished my dad would come home.

We lived at 690 North, 3rd East, I think, in Spanish Fork, Utah.[1] Originally it had been part of a grocery store that my parents bought and moved onto a corner lot. They built onto this store and made a nice four-roomed house. I remember them bringing the lumber and how they sawed and nailed each piece, my father and a nice older man. I've wondered if this could have been my Grandpa Jex, who died when I was around four, or if it was one of my mother's brothers. I remember he was so cheerful. I liked him a lot.

I remember World War I. Well, I was under four but I still remember a few things, mostly the singing like "Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag, and smile..." and I wondered why people would cry about that. Also "Over there," and "tenting tonight," and I remember being puzzled why they'd feel sad about going out in a tent. I wondered about the talk of "Kaiser Bill" and who he was.

I didn't understand much about Kaiser, and some of the other words they used, but I knew something important was going on. One night my father was helping me with my prayers and he told me to ask the Lord to bless the little Russians and Belgians, and after the prayer I asked who they were, and he tried to explain about the war and how some children were orphans and some didn't have enough to eat and some were cold, and I told

1 In 1988, this house was still there. Might still be there today.

my father I thought someone should send some help over there. He told me a Mr. Hoover was working on that.

Chapter 2: Sarah Louisa

My father's younger brother Ray called to see us. He was all dressed up in a uniform (World War 1). He needed a ride to the railroad station, so someone got a horse and buggy and I got to go along. There were many soldiers and people were cheering them by singing songs. I thought they were great heroes. I remember how they looked in the uniforms, and how my Uncle Ray told my mother goodbye and said she was getting a little fat. I didn't like him saying a thing like that and then laughing about it.

A few days later, on September 6, 1918, just before my fourth birthday, I was outside playing with my cousin and I heard my father coming down the path where I was. He told me it was all right for me to play, he was going to see Grandma Jex, my mother's mother. Soon he and Grandma hurried by. Grandma was carrying a portable, plug in electrical heater. I wondered why she needed that. She said, "Now you children stay out here and play, or else go over to Lizzies."

That was my mother's sister, Elizabeth, also mother of the cousin I was playing with. I remember we were puzzled by their actions, so we wandered over to his place to talk to his mom.

She finished what she was doing and told us to stay with Uncle Burt (her husband) and said she'd be back after awhile. When she came back she told me I had a new sister, and I could go see her if I wanted to.

I did. I thought she was pretty little, and I didn't see why my mother was in bed while the sun was still shining.

They named her Sarah Louisa after both of her Grandmas. Everyone seemed so happy, and I was too, because we had a new baby, but I thought she was awfully small.

It was a little while after this, it seemed only a day or two, that my Grandma Jex came to stay with us, and she wouldn't let me go in the bedroom.

My father was in bed too now, and I was really upset, and wanted to go see why. Grandma was crying. She told me they both had the flu, and maybe they would even die if they didn't get lots of rest, so I should stay away, and I should say my prayers so they could get better.

Both of my parents were quite ill[2], and I remember Aunt Alice in a starched white apron. Grandma Jex tried to keep me

2 In a letter to Leola, her father, Leo Freshwater later wrote, "It was when Sarah was a baby that I got the real "old fashioned" flu while working at the Spanish Fork Sugar Factory, and couldn't even sit up and turn a steam valve to raise the gate to let the beets into the beet washer, or turn it back to stop them when there were enough. That's how the Lord got me home that time, when I was needed. Well, not wishing to brag, I guess I been a pretty good old work horse (after I got broke in)."
- From a letter dated 25 Jan 1948

out of their bedroom. They had curtains in the doorway instead of a door, and every time I'd think Grandma wasn't looking I'd peek between the curtains to see if they were still in bed, and she said, Do you want to get the flue, too, so you have to go to bed?"

Of course I didn't want that, but I did miss my parents. It seemed they stayed there for such a long time – several days.

I remember asking Grandma why we should be quiet, and why didn't they get up, because anyone can see it's morning.

Grandma took me in the other room and told me not to worry, and wouldn't I like to hear a little song. Guess what the name of it was? Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are.

I interrupted and said, "Well, Grandma, what is a star, anyhow?"

She said, "Well, listen to the rest of the words: 'up above the world so high, like a diamond in the sky.'"

I remember thinking how beautiful that song was, and she told me to be sure and look at the sky at night and I'd find one that is brighter than the rest, and it was like a diamond.

Well of course this gave me something to look forward to. I seemed to really *see* the stars then. Now lots of times I sing it to myself when I happen to look up and see the beauty of the stars.

They finally did get better.

I was so glad when they could get up and walk around again. Oh what a happy day it was when we could all sit around the table together again. It seems my happiest memories are of being around a table, as a family.

Soon after this the war ended. I remember there was lots of celebrating and being happy, but I found my Grandma Jex crying.

I said, "Why aren't you happy too, Grandma?"

She said to me, "So many of the boys won't be coming home."

I didn't understand. I was only four, but I remember how sad I felt because my Grandma felt sad. I didn't know much about the tragedy of war then.

My baby sister had poor health. I remember the excitement, and the wonder, that anything so little could be so alive and so noisy. The poor little thing cried a lot because she wasn't well. They had a hard time finding milk that would agree with her. I remember seeing Grandma put a soda cracker in water and feeding this to her, and that helped her to stop crying and go to sleep. She didn't grow very fast like she should and the doctor told my folks she might do better in a different place.

My parents worried about losing her.

My father had been out of work quite awhile, and decided to go to work in the mines in Eureka. Mom moved there with her three little girls, and they worried if the move would hurt their child. They decided to try anyway as she wasn't getting any stronger where they were.

We lived in a little house with thin walls and we could hear the people who lived by us. I remember they quarreled, and their baby cried.

I didn't like living there at first. I missed our relatives, but I soon made friends with neighbor children. My own little sister Ruby liked to follow me everywhere. My sister Sarah started to grow stronger. She really thrived and grew in Eureka.

I remember them bringing the lumber and how they sawed and nailed each piece, my father and a nice older man. I've wondered since if this could have been my Grandpa Jex who died when I was around four, or if it was one of my mother's brothers. I remember he was so cheerful. I liked him a lot.

I remember how our father would take the three of us for a walk in the foothills every day and he's show us the wonders of nature. He'd tell us about the flowers we saw the pretty rocks. We were fascinated. I remember that so clearly. I still remember our joy when he'd come home and we could take our walk with him. He let me look all around while he rested on a rock, holding my baby sister. She loved to go outside. She never cried while Papa had her with him.

Sometimes he would show us some ore samples so we would know what kind of mining he did, and what kind of rocks were under the ground where he went to work each day. I liked to see the sparkle of the silver in it. I loved to look at these ore samples and hear him explain. He told me it was very dark down there, and that is why he had to wear a special light on his cap. I think it was a carbine lamp he used. That was all the light they had, then—just the light that came from each man's lamp.

After we talked and walked awhile, our baby sister would get sleepy, so he would tell me to take Ruby's hand, and we would go back to the house. Ruby was only about two, and she never did

want to go back home, but I'd coax her. Sometimes I'd give her a flower to carry to Mamma.

I learned many things while I was there. I learned some people were called Mexicans, and others Greeks and Italians. The only thing that seemed different to me was that some didn't talk like I did, but I liked all of them.

Chapter 3: Ruby Sister

"You gave me the shortest name of all your children," Ruby said once to her mom, "and then you only gave me one name."

Mom said, "You were named after a very dear friend of mine, and she only had one name, but never mind, when you get married, you will get an extra name."

I remember how mom put her arm around her as she said it, and I remember feeling just a little bit jealous. I remember thinking, "Our mom likes her best." I tried not to mind. After all, our dad took me places with him. He was always saying, "This is my little girl," in a way that made me feel so special.

Mom used to braid my hair into long braids, but Ruby got to have shorter hair and a pretty ribbon on her head. Mom was always saying to me, "see what a cute little sister you have."

I didn't like that, and especially when she wanted me to take her with me when I went to play with my friends. She'd say, "can't you see how much she likes you?"

I had to admit she probably was better than any of my friends sisters. Mom always made her clean, and besides, she'd do anything I would ask her to do. She didn't bawl around and act dumb like some girls. She just wanted to go where I went (and sometimes I wanted to be alone).

While we were growing up, everybody said how cute and plump she was and how I was a string bean.

We were in a Christmas program. She was one of the angels, with the white nightgown. She got to sing. I had to wait my turn and come out and tell about Jesus being born. Another time in a school play, she was making music by using a comb and paper to blow through. I think it was *Stars & Stripes forever*. Again I had a talking part. I can't remember mine now, but I do remember how Ruby got to play that music over and over every time we had company.

We were in a dance, too. We both wanted the pink outfit. She got it because her skin was a little darker, and they thought blue would be better on me. I remember thinking, "She's only darker because she gets to go out in the sun to play more than I do."

I guess we were in junior high before I really truly stopped being jealous of Ruby. That seems so funny now. She never gave me any cause for it.

But one day she did what I asked her to, and I really got scared.

We had been to a movie, something about Fu Manchu, a Chinaman. And he would hypnotize people. We were quite involved in that movie, wondering if it really was possible for one

person to hypnotize another. So, for fun we tried it. Of course I was the one to give the orders. She was supposed to pretend she was hypnotized. I'm not sure what I had her looking at, but I told her to concentrate on it, and I started some mumbo-jumbo kind of stuff. Then I told her to sit down, take off her shoes, and about a dozen other things. She didn't hesitate. She did everything I told her today. I laughed and said, "You are doing pretty good."

She never said a word back, just stared straight ahead.

I said, “Okay, that's enough playing around.”

But still she stared straight ahead. I thought to myself, she really is hypnotized. Now what do I do? I was never that scared. All I could think of was, “What if I can't get her out of it?"

Then I decided to do what the guy did in the movie. I got her to sit down. I told her she was going to wake up in a few minutes and she wouldn't remember any of this, but she'd go get herself a drink of water and then should be fine again. It worked. She got up and went after a drink. After she finished the drink of water, she seemed as natural as ever, but I didn't ever want to play that game again.

Chapter 4: Mamma's Gift

Mom was about five foot tall, I think, with brown hair, like mine, and a sort of round face with pink cheeks. But she had the bluest eyes, just like Sarah's, and the most delightful sense of humor at times, always teasing my Dad into a better humor, or teasing him in a playful way. And yet she loved him and respected him, looked up to him.

I loved to walk to church with them. Mom took such short quick little steps, two to one of Dad's. She was always hurrying. Never wanted to stop to walk, it seemed like, always taking little running steps to get there faster, telling us children she could get to the door first, things like that.

And when we did get to church how I loved to hear them sing. Mom's voice seemed to ring out louder and clearer than anyone's. She put so much enthusiasm in it. Anyone knew she loved her Lord. But Mom sang at home, too, all the time. I'd wake in the morning to Gospel songs almost every day. Sometimes my Dad would sing too, but mostly he whistled. Mom

was always helping someone – sitting up with the sick, helping with new babies, or she was busy cooking something to send to the old folks in our neighborhood, or to someone else she thought needed it.

The hardest part of all for Mom was later when she herself got rheumatoid arthritis so bad she had to go to bed with it. But even then she was gracious, and appreciative, and gave far more in cheer and good feelings, than any of us ever gave her. She was determined not to be heavy for people to lift. I doubt if she was over 150 lbs. She wrote to me once a week for many years, and when she couldn't write, she urged my father to do it, and she'd tuck in verses she'd had him clip from things she read.

There is one thing that happened while Dad was in the mines. Since then, I too, have had many experiences with ESP (extra sensory perception) but this was the first time I ever knew there was such a thing.

One morning something woke me up. My Mamma and Papa were having an argument in the kitchen and Papa didn't sound very happy. Mamma didn't usually scold and I just couldn't believe what I was hearing. I slipped out of bed in my nightie, over to the door. I could hear Papa saying he had to get to work in about two minutes or they'd go down without him. Once that whistle blew it would be too late.

Mamma said he couldn't go. I saw her put the key down her dress. He couldn't get out the locked door and he couldn't find the key. She told him she'd had this awful dream where he got killed.

She said, "I had an awful dream. I saw a big rock fall and it hit you, and I won't let you go."[3]

Dad tried to get the key anyhow, but she had hid it somewhere and she wouldn't tell him where.

Just then I heard the whistle blow. Papa sat down on the chair and put his head down on the table. "Well, it's too late now."

I knew he was feeling bad. He knew they'd gone down in the mine without him.

Mamma took the key from down in front of her dress, and she put the key by him on the table. They both knew it was too late for work now.

She said, "I know that meant something awful was going to happen to the people in this house if I didn't do something."

Dad was still upset. He took me for a walk.

I remember all day I kept looking up at the hill and wondering why no rock came rolling down.

Later that evening, someone knocked on our door. It was father's foreman.

I heard him talking quietly to my parents. He ended by saying, "Thank God you didn't come to work today, that's all I can say. A big rock slab broke loose right where you'd have been working. There was no warning. You would have been crushed."

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3 In another account of this event, Leola says, "She dreamed a big rock rolled down the hill and fell on their house and crushed it and she knew something awful was going to happen."

After the man left, my dad put his arms around Mom and said, "I won't ever doubt you again."

Mom had many experiences like that.

Years later when I talked to my father and asked if he remembered this incident, he nodded and the tears came to his eyes. He said, "Your mother had a gift for telling when things were going to happen like that, and I never doubted her again."

Mother was always helping people. She helped a little Mexican lady who was having a baby, and after that, their family and ours were good friends. They tried so hard to pay our mother back for her kindness by being good to us, too.

I had a girl friend who lived quite near. She had several sisters and brothers, parents and a man that stayed at their home as a boarder. They all seemed happy together. But one night something terrible happened.

I was wakened from sleep. I could hear terrible sounds in the night, like a woman screaming, and then crying. My parents went out, or at least my father did, to see what was wrong, and I was told to go back to bed.

I remember I went to the bedroom, but I couldn't sleep. I got up again and looked out my bedroom window where I could see someone flashing a light. I saw either a truck or a wagon back up by something in the road. I couldn't see who was being lifted into the back of that vehicle—there were too many people standing around. But when they moved away a little bit, I could see a man's feet sticking out of the back. The feet had minor's

shoes on them, and one was kind of dragging a little, and I hoped he wouldn't lose his shoe. There was something strange about them I couldn't understand, and I didn't know who to ask. Then the vehicle (whether wagon or slow moving truck), started up, and I watched those feet dangling oddly, until it was gone from sight.

The next day my little friend told me their boarder had died and their father was in jail. Then her Mom called her and she had to go in. She couldn't talk to me any more. She couldn't talk to anybody. She just had to stay home.

People in the neighborhood were talking to each other by their fences, or houses, but they'd be quiet when I came close enough to hear. Nobody would go to that poor lady's house. I could hear her crying when I went to the door, but my friend told me she couldn't come out. She shut the door before I could ask her any questions.

After a while Mamma went over to see the lady. Mamma told her best friend and then they both went over. She told me she was really crying—so were her children. They were talking about the funeral for the man who had died. The next day they went to the funeral. My Papa had to work, so I think my Aunt Hannah tended me and my little sisters.

I remember Mom saying, "Somebody has to comfort his wife. It wasn't her fault."

After many days went by, my little friend told me she could play with me again. I even went to her home, but her Mamma was very sad and quiet. There were no more men around to tease me or scold me. It was just the Mamma and her children. They didn't want to talk about the Papa or the Boarder.

I asked my father about these things. He told me the woman had lived with the man for several years. They had been quite happy raising their family, but the woman decided they should be married. The man said he did not want to marry her. The woman had learned more about these things and she kept coaxing him to "Come and marry me" but he would not.

One day, their Boarder heard them and said, "I would be glad to marry you."

The woman said, "All right. If he won't marry me, I'll marry you."

He still wouldn't.

So she married the Boarder. Then the Boarder said to the woman's former companion, "Now that I am the husband, you are the boarder."

Well, he did not like that at all. That night he waited until the other man was just getting off work. I won't tell you how he killed him. It still makes me shudder. He did, that's all. Then my father told me something I had only guessed at. He said people really gossiped, and blamed the woman, and wouldn't even go to sympathize with her. As he told it, tears came to my father's eyes as he talked of my Mom.

He said, "Susan figured she was a woman grieving, no matter who was right or wrong. She had lost both of her men." He paused for a moment, like he did when he wanted to tell me more.

I knew it was hard for him to get the words out, but they came finally.

"You know, Mom and her friend were the only ones that went to that funeral besides the wife and children."

I knew how my father loved my mother, and I was beginning to understand why. It wasn't ever any great thing she did, it was all the hundreds of little compassionate, loving things.

She always had such compassion for anyone in need of help. Many times she went the extra mile, and taught us in so many ways that we should be thankful for our blessings, and that we had a happy home.

When I was a youngster, some of us were talking about talents. Mom said she'd never had any special talents for music, or cooking, or painting, etc. But since then I realized that she had another talent—that of making and keeping friends, of giving them strength and encouragement, and a feeling that they are worth something in this life. Somehow I think that must be the greatest talent of all. She had a knack for helping a person when they needed it. And when I say friends, I don't just mean the people she happened to meet. She also kept friendships with her children and other relatives.

She helped many, and was loved by many.

Chapter 5: Good and Bad

I still remember my first moving picture and how thrilled I was because the pictures seemed to come alive, even if they did move in a jerky way and you had to read words. My mother told me what they said. But when the villain gave a girl some poison and she either fainted or died, I cried, and I didn't like the movie any more. Mother said I was too young to go anyhow.

It was here in the mining camp that I learned about the good and evil in people, too. I had one grown-up Mexican friend I really loved. His name was Jesus and I wondered if he was the real Jesus come back again because he was so good to all the children. Every pay day he'd gather us up and take us to the store for treats. All the other children seemed to crowd in ahead of me, but he'd always be sure I had my share too.

One day my mom told me not to go with him. I felt bad, staying home when all the other children followed after him. When they came back he called me over and gave me a fifty cent piece.

I ran to show my mother. She grabbed my hand and ran out to catch up with him. Then she told me to give the money back to him.

He said, "Why do you do this? I only gave it to her because I like little children and she did not get any candy. She is a nice little girl and doesn't ask for things like the others."

My mom said, "I cannot let her take money or candy from any man except her father."

He said, "It is too bad. I meant no harm."

Mom tried to explain to me that maybe this man Jesus was a good man, but some men were not good men and I was too young to know the difference, so I could not have any money or candy.

Later he patted my head and said something to me like, "That is how it is with grown-ups, they don't understand."

I do, now, of course. At that time I thought all people were good to little children. I found out in a sad way that they weren't.

My mother had sent me to the store for some little items.

I think maybe my father felt sorry for me, so he handed me some money and I ran to the store to spend it.

I noticed some men leaning against the side of the building when I went in. As I came out, one of the men said, "Come over here."

I didn't know if I should. I started to go past him.

He'd lighted up a smoke, and he tossed the lighted match down the back of my dress. I ran home screaming. I still remember how awful it sounded when that man laughed at my pain and fear.

My back had just a small burn on it but my father was angry. He took me by the hand and wanted me to point out the man that did it. We hurried, but the men were gone. One thing I learned was to not trust everybody ever again.

I still feel proud that my father would come to my rescue so quickly without seeing the men, how many or how big. They had hurt his little girl and he was going to take care of them. After that I couldn't go to the store unless my parents, one of them, was with me... and I knew there were bad people in the world, as well as good ones.

We moved back to Spanish Fork. Mom wanted to be near her mother. Around this time, my grandfather Jex died in Spanish Fork. I don't remember too much about him. He did have arthritis and had to keep off his feet. He had a good sense of humor. He loved the children and talked to us, teasing some. That is quite a bit for a four year old to remember. Later, I learned he had come to Utah as a convert to the church, and that he stayed loyal to its standards. He came from England with a wife and six children. Six more were born in America. He called my mother "the little stow-away" because she was born three months after they arrived here.

When I was a little girl about four years old, I had a kitten. I really loved that little kitten. Something awful happened to my little kitten.

My mother was gone somewhere and my father was taking care of my sister and me. It was dark. We were ready to go to bed. Then some tomcats started to make yowling noises on our back porch. My dad took a broom to scare them away. He hit the floor

of the porch with a broom to make a noise to scare the tomcats away. He did it two or three times, hitting the floor hard. It did scare away the tomcats, but guess what—when he came down hard with a broom it hit my kitten. Yes, it killed her. I cried and cried. I thought my dad killed her on purpose. He told me it was an accident, and he was sorry. I think I cried almost all night, I felt so bad.

In the bible Jesus tells us that not one sparrow shall fall, but our Father in Heaven knows about it. If He cares for even a little bird then we know he cares for us too. He didn't tell us we would never get hurt. He knows we would get hurt, but he wants us to know he cares about us.

He didn't tell us we would never get hurt. He knew we would get hurt, but He wants us to know He cares about us. Even if we die, our spirit goes to Him, and I believe the spirit of a little bird goes to heaven, too.

Chapter 6: Kindergarten Song

I'll never forget how thrilled I was to finally be old enough to start school. My father put me on the handle bars of his bike and took me to get registered and to have my physical. He didn't seem to mind that he was the only man there with all those women. I was so worried about the doctor and nurse, but my dad stayed right by me. I don't know why I was afraid. They didn't hurt me—just listened to my heart and looked me over good. I was excited, too.

They they told me I couldn't go that year because my birthday came a day late. The deadline then was September 30th. Why did I have to be born just a few minutes past midnight? It was one of the biggest disappointments of my life. My father tried to comfort me. He told me I could learn lots of things at home, and I did. I told him, "but I wanted to learn to read my own stories." I loved to hear stories and my parents were good to read to me. I was so fascinated by words. (I still am.)

So I started to learn some on my own, on the milk can, or sugar bag, or newspaper or whatever else was handy that had printing on it. I knew my numbers, but I had to wait. At least I could go to Sunday School and primary. I loved to go.

So when I did finally start school, learning came easily. I still remember the thrill of reading my first book all by myself! School work always came easily for me, probably because I had learned to seek out information wherever I could find it, as well as going to school to learn it.

I loved my teacher and I loved to learn new things. Then I'd hurry home and tell Mom and my little sisters all the things that happened. It was such a happy time for me.

I still remember the morning so long ago when I went with my older cousin to practice for a Mother's Day program. My cousin seemed so unafraid, so unconcerned. But then she was old enough to go to school, and I was just learning to leave home.

I remember saying, "I wish my Mamma could come too."

"Silly goose," she said, "how could she come now, when it is a surprise for her?"

I tried to not shake too much as I went inside the building, but I remember how lonely I felt. Even when our neighbor, sister Brown came towards me, smiling. I felt a little better when she took my hand an told me where to sit.

In a way it was exciting, being with the other children, and hearing the music. I liked the sound of the piano with its tinkle sound. Not at all like Grandma's organ.

We practiced how to sing, and it was easy to follow the music, but the words were hard to remember. That is why we sang it over and over. We practiced lots of days.

Finally it was time for the Mammas to come to hear it. So she made me a pretty dress. It had ribbons and lace and flowers that Mamma sewed on it, just for me. We both liked that dress a lot. She called me her little Princess and I felt like one, too.

It was such a sunshiny day when we were walking to the program. Mamma was pushing the baby buggy with her baby in it, and Ruby and I were walking by her side.

All the children that were in the program had to sit up front by the teachers, so I found my place. Mamma sat right down there on the front row, so Ruby could see, too. It was fun to watch all the mothers come in and take their places. My my Mamma was the prettiest of all of them. She had such pink cheeks, and blue eyes and the darkest brown hair. But mostly she was so smiling and happy looking.

The music started playing, and it was like rain drops falling in the water, with the sparkles of sunshine on it, too, and green grass and flowers all around the water. How I loved to listen to that piano playing and make up pictures in my mind.

Sister Brown made the signal for us to stand up, and we did. Then her hand came down with the music and we started to sing the first line of the song, "Oh, I had such a pretty dream, Mamma..."

I can't remember all the words to that song, and it isn't in our song book any more. All I remember is that it is a song about

a child who sees a beautiful angel, "All sparkling and shining with dew. She touched me and spoke, and I quickly awoke. And I found then, dear Mamma, 'twas you."

I was singing the worlds straight to my mother. To me she was a beautiful angel. She was so beautiful the way she was smiling and looking just at me, and I loved her so very much!

After the program was over, the mothers kissed and hugged the children. My Mamma did, too. And she told me I did good. I felt so warm inside and happy. I hummed the music all the way home.

Mamma wanted me to sing the song for Papa so he could hear it too. I was glad I could. Then later, she asked me to sing it for Grandma and I sang it again, but I started to wonder about something.

That evening, after supper, we had company drop in, and Mamma told me to sing the song for them. I told her I didn't want to.

"She's probably tired," Mamma told them. Then she told me to get ready for bed.

Mamma didn't come to hear my prayers. She was busy with company and sent Papa.

"It's the song," I told Papa. "I wanted it to be just for Mamma. But she wants it to be for everybody."

Papa didn't laugh. He just nodded and smiled a little bit and said, "It's all right. Your Mamma didn't know how you felt. She was just so proud because you can sing so well. She just wanted everyone to hear your sweet voice singing."

I thought about it a little while, and I felt better. Then I kissed Papa and told him I was ready for my prayers.

Mamma came in before I went to sleep. She kissed me goodnight. She told me she loved me and was proud of me. I believed her. I still remember how happy it made me that night so long ago.

Chapter 7: David Irvin

I still remember the cool breeze that swept down Spanish Fork Canyon in the early morning. It seemed to sweep the whole town clean and wake people up.

Something else wakened us on the morning of the fourth of July. It was the loud booming sounds of cannons being fired, just at day break, louder than thunder. I'd run to my parents, scared. Papa told me this was to remind people of the very first fourth of July and how we got our country started. He told me all about George Washington and his brave men, how they were willing to go in the cold – and many times they did not have food to eat or blankets to keep them warm at night. They did this because they believed it was right. They wanted a home of their own and a country where they could be free. My Papa told me, before I ever went to school, and I loved our country and our flag.

All our family would get dressed and get ready to go to see the parade. We'd take a lunch along so we could go to the park

after. Sometimes someone gave us a ride. Many times we just walked.

We'd find a good place to wait for the parade and oh we were so excited when we finally heard the music of the bands. the men carrying the flag. We stood up and put and put our hand over our heart while it passed. How beautiful they were, the waving red and white stripes and in the corner of blue, white stars. Oh how I loved that flag!

The horses and riders passed, the floats all colors and some with pretty ladies and little children. Music came from everywhere. Everyone was so happy.

After the parade, we'd go to the park to hear the band playing patriotic songs.

Our aunts and uncles and cousins would all meet in one corner of the park. The men would put a few benches in a half circle so all the grown ups could sit down and visit. The children were too busy playing, but we always came near at lunch time.

Uncle Jim usually brought a case of soda pop. He'd let us choose our flavors. It was such fun. Then we'd each go to our parents for a sandwich or a cookie. It was fun to sit on the cool grass to eat together, to talk, to have fun together.

Sometimes Papa would walk around with us, to look at the floats they'd parked. It was fun to walk all around them, to see the pretty colors up close, even to touch it carefully, to look under the paper to see the wheels of wagons or carts, and a few had cars or trucks under. Papa liked to look, too.

Many children ran around shooting cap guns. They were noisy and I didn't like the smell. Some even had fire crackers and I was scared of them.

Papa told me that was how his father lost some of his fingers, was because a fire cracker went off in his hand. He was on a float and someone threw firecrackers inside to scare him. He knew they could start a fire in all that crepe paper, so he grabbed one and threw it on the road. When he tried to throw the next one, it was too late. It went off in his hand. He had a thumb left and two fingers, I think.

Always at night, on the fourth of July, we would watch the fireworks. Oh it was fun to see the magic lights in the sky. It was fun to see who could guess first just what it was supposed to be. We'd watch until we started to get sleepy. It was such a special day.

On May 7, 1920 my brother David Irvin was born. The Lady that came to help mom, a Mrs. Sorensen, wrote a poem and read it in Sunday School. It went something like this, "The father's eyes did light with joy... when first he learned it was a boy." She gave Mom a copy of the poem, and Mom read it to everyone who came to see us. She loved poetry. Maybe it was way back then that I first decided I'd like to read and write magic kind of words to make people happy... to be a writer.

Mom didn't feel a bit surprised that she had a boy this time. She had "the gift" as we called it, and often could see future events before they came to pass. Three different times she had dreamed of this child. She saw a boy about twelve, playing a

violin. He told her, "I am going to be your little boy, but I can't stay with you very long. My name is David."

Later, Mom didn't want to believe the dream because she wanted to keep her boy. So she decided to name him a different name. When the man said, "We give you the name of David Irvin," someone said to mom, "He's got the first name wrong..."

Mom said, "No, it is right."

But we always called him Irvin. His life only lasted eleven years and nine months... I loved him dearly. He was my Buddy... the best kid brother a girl ever had.

I remember that year so well, because we had the new baby. By his first Christmas, he was big enough to sit up alone. He smiled a lot and tried to talk. He was our first boy. Ruby was five, almost, and Sarah was three. We lived in a little four-roomed house in Spanish Fork, Utah, just a little ways from My Grandma Jex's house.

I loved school that year. It was such fun to make all the Christmas pictures, to bring home red and green paper chains. It was fun too, to learn all the Christmas songs and to be in the school play, to pretend I was one of Santa's helpers.

Finally we had our school party, and traded gifts, and gathered up all the things we had been making from our desks. Somebody said it was snowing outside, and we were so excited it was hard to get into our warm coats and hats and boots.

It wasn't cold out. I couldn't feel any wind blowing al all. I looked up at the sky and could see millions of little white snow flakes coming down. They felt soft and wet on my face as they melted. It was a cool nice feeling. I watched them land on my

sleeve and the were like little stars, each different, but each one had six little points. My friends told me to hurry, or I'd get all wet standing there, so I started moving along towards Grandma's house.

My Mamma had told me to stop at Grandma's because that is where she'd be. Mamma was helping her sisters get the place ready for a party. It looked like it, too. There were red and green decorations everywhere, and pictures of the Christ child with Mary and Joseph. Even the big round table in the middle of the room had a fancy table cloth on it, with lots of lace around the edges, and there were plates full of cookies and good things to eat on the table.

I remember the cookie because Grandma gave me one. She told me not to go into the parlor or I might get cookie crumbs in there on the red carpet. Besides, they were decorating a big tree in that room. So I just talked to my Grandma until it was time for my Mother to go home.

The party at Grandma's was for Christmas Eve, only we came in the afternoon, so there would be plenty of time for us to get home again to get ready for Santa to come.

I remember we had lots of fun that afternoon. When they sang songs around the organ, I could sing, too, because I had learned the words to most of them. Did you know I sang Silent Night, too, in those long ago days? We had lot of good things to eat, mostly cookies and lemonade and fruitcake – things like that.

When we were through eating, Grandma told us she had a surprise for us in the parlor. We had to make two lines, one for girls, and one for boys. Then she told us we had to be careful in

the parlor, and just sit down on the rug because there were many things that could break in there. I knew what she meant, because she had shown me so many things her boys brought from missions to New Zealand, and other places, and of course things she had from England, and they were glass and could break easily.

We lined up and walked in carefully and sat down. We could see a big beautiful tree in one corner. It had strings of popcorn on it, and red cranberries on strings, and little candles, all lighted up. I knew they would watch the candles carefully so they wouldn't burn out before they blew them out again, like on Christmas cake. But there was something else on the tree, too, lots and lots of little dolls and little bags, all different colors of dresses on the dolls. Grandma gave every little girl a doll and every little boy a small bag of marbles. Of course our baby was too little, so he got a rattle to shake.

My doll had a pink skirt on. It was so little I could hide it in my hand, with only it's feet sticking out. It was made of celluloid. That isn't very heavy, and it won't break if you drop it, but you better not squeeze it or sit on it, or it will get smashed and go as flat as paper. But if you be careful with them they are nice dolls.

I liked my little doll very much, but I sure hoped Santa would still bring me a big doll. I wanted one with a soft body, one I could take to bed and not smash it if I just happened to roll over on it. I was hoping I'd get one big enough to dress in real baby clothes so I could pretend it was a real baby. That was the only thing I wanted Santa to bring to me. And of course my sister Ruby wanted a big baby doll too. Sarah didn't care. When you are only three, you like everything.

It was getting dark when we started home from our Grandma's house. The snow was quite deep now, and kind of hard to walk in because it was crunchy and frozen. Your feet would be on top, and then they would break through a crust and your foot would go down into the softer snow. It sounded funny to hear all of us going crunch, crunch, when we walked along. I was glad it wasn't very far.

Stars were starting to come out. Papa told us to look at the bigger shiny one over by the mountain. He asked us if we thought that is the way the Christmas star looked long ago when the Wise Men followed it. But we thought that must have been a brighter star that night.

Then suddenly behind us we heard a sound of sleighbells coming down the road and I got worried. "What if that is Santa?" I asked.

"No, it isn't him," Papa said, "he never starts until midnight."

Just then a team of horses passed us. They were pulling a sleigh with people in it.

Ruby spoke up, "Besides, Santa comes with reindeer."

It was still warm in our house but Papa put some more firewood into the stove anyway, so it would keep warm. Then he put a rope across the room and tied it on one big chair and then another, so we would have a place to hang our stockings. Of course it was over by the wall, so we wouldn't surprise ourselves by falling over it. We hung up three brown stockings for the girls, then Mamma got a little white stocking for our boy, and then she did something I'll never forget...

Mamma picked up her baby from the bed and hugged him in her arms. Then she showed him the stockings on the line. Then she took his little white stocking and sang a song just to her baby. This is what she sang:

Hang up the baby's stocking
Be sure you don't forget
For the dear little dimpled darling
Has never seen Christmas yet.
I told him all about it
And he opened his big blue eyes
I'm sure he understood me
'Cause he looked so cunning and wise.":

Mom turned to the rest of us then and asked us to help her sing it, and we did. Somehow it seemed so natural to sing to a baby, to tell him about his first Christmas.

We all got into our night clothes. We had our prayers and our good night kisses, but I could not go to sleep. I guess I was just too excited. I kept calling out to my parents, "Has Santa come yet?" and they kept telling me, "No. Go back to sleep." So finally I did get back to sleep.

Something funny woke me up. It was my Mother calling out in the night, "You children get back to bed."

I answered her by saying, "I am in bed. So is Sarah and Ruby."

I could hear her up in the front room so I got up too, to see what was wrong. Mamma was laughing like everything.

I said, "What is so funny?"

"Over there," she said, "I looked at the rocker, and I thought that was girls sitting over there."

I looked, and there were two beautiful dolls, just the size of babies. I ran over to look closer. One had Ruby's name on it and one had mine.

"Santa has come!" I called out. I was so happy. He did bring me a doll, and she felt so soft, just like a baby, and I knew I could dress her in my little brother's clothes.

That was all I got for Christmas that year... One big doll, and one little doll that my Grandma gave me. But it was enough. It was all I really wanted.

Maybe that is why I remember that year so well. Maybe it was because I really did believe special things happen on Christmas Day. Maybe it was remembering my Mother's singing. I know when I looked at my little brother I remembered the little baby Jesus, and I knew everyone loved Him because I loved my little brother.

Chapter 8: Calla Lily

Mamma was always collecting starts of slips as she called them, for new house plants. Our big windows were full of them. Mostly geraniums, of course, but she had about every color imaginable.

It always amazed me that Mamma's flowers would keep on growing like that because she'd get so busy she'd forget to water them.

She was always saying to me, "Go water the poor flowers before they die of thirst."

I'd feel so sorry for those poor flowers. Sometimes the dirt in the pot would be so hard it would crack, and when I poured the water, it gurgled and tried to get to where the rots were. And I wished Mamma would watch them better. They seemed so glad to have a drink.

One day Mamma brought home a new flower someone had given her. She said it was a Calla Lily, and all she knew was that it had a white flower and it was hard to get it to bloom inside.

She said in California they grew fields of them right outside. I decided we'd grow it inside all right. I'd take car of that little flower personally.

It seemed to me it was a delicate little flower right from the start. If it dried the least bit it wilted and looked awful. If I watered it too much it turned yellow and the soil got all heavy and smelled moldy. I knew that wasn't good. So each day I would feel the top of the dirt to see if it needed more water or not.

When it got wintertime we'd always take our flowers out of the window at night so they wouldn't freeze after the fire went out. Our house would get so cold we could always see Jack Frost designs in ice on the glass when we first got up, before the fire got started good. But when the designs got steamy and started melting away, we'd put the flowers back in the window.

I liked to see the pretty colors of geraniums blooming, and I could hardly wait until we also had a lily. It would be fun to see something different.

All winter we had tended the flowers but no lily bloomed. It was growing, but very slowly. Then one day I thought I saw a bud forming on the green stem that came up by itself from the dirt. By the next day I was sure it was a bud. It was getting higher and growing faster. Then a lighter green on the end started turning white. All of us were so excited. At last we were going to see a real lily.

No one had told us just how velvety it would look inside, or how pure a white. It was so lovely we could hardly speak. Then one of the children said, "What is that golden stem inside of it?"

"Maybe it is the Golden Rule," our little brother said.

"Wrapped in an angel's wing," I said.

"I think it's more like a baby in a blanket," another sister said.

We all agreed it was the best and most beautiful flower any of us had ever seen. We carried it carefully to the window and put it so the blossom would show through, so every one that passed could enjoy it too.

A few years later we did go tot California and we did see them growing outside. In fact our Aunt Florrie had a row of them by the side of her house. They were much taller and had bigger blossoms that showed up better. But I didn't see any that were lovelier than the one we had grown.

"Why shouldn't they be bigger?" I said. "They get all the sunshine they need, and no cold. Everything else is just right for them here. But we had to help ours grow."

"If we didn't," little sister Ruby said, "It would have died."

"The flower grew because you loved it, and took care of it," Mamma said.

I remembered how happy I felt. I knew we were growing because our Mamma loved us, too. Like Ruby said, "If they didn't love us and take care of us, we would have died."

Mamma sometimes forgot her flowers, but she never ever forgot her children.

Chapter 9: Grandma Freshwater's Visit

When I was talking with my mother one day after I was grown, I said, "I wish you would tell me something about my Grandpa Jex. I don't even remember him much."

Mom said, "How could you? You were only about four when he died."

"I remember seeing him sit in a chair, and he had a cane, and it was hard for him to move around, and that is about it."

She reminded me he used to run a store. Even had it burn to the ground once, and built it over. He worked for long hours as a janitor in a school. She herself had helped him, just as other children had helped him. But when she was in the sixth grade, she became ill and could not climb the stairs any more, so her father made her stay home. That was all the schooling she had because of her illness. They figured it was heart trouble. Later, she wondered if she'd had rheumatic fever.

My Mom told me many stories about my Grandpa Jex, but my favorite of them all was how it was when she was first married.

After a few weeks of married life, my Mom decided she didn't like it. She thought she had made a big mistake. So, she packed all her clothes in her suitcases and she took the train to Spanish Fork, where her parents lived.

Of course they were very happy to see her. And she was happy to see her little brothers and sisters.

After all the family had had a chance to tell her hello, she said her father sent them all back to their work. He wanted to be alone with his daughter.

Mom said she was very surprised when he said, "Suzie, we are very glad to see you, you know that, but I would like to know just how long you plan on visiting with us."

Mom said she took a deep breath. She knew she had to tell him the truth. She said, "I don't intend this to be a visit. I came back home to live. I am going to take care of you and mother."

Her father said, "What about your husband?"

"I don't love him. It was all a mistake."

"What has love got to do with it?" he asked her. "You made a promise and I expect you to keep that promise."

Mom said she just couldn't believe he wouldn't understand. She felt so hurt. Here she was, willing to devote the rest of her life to her parents, and he didn't want her.

Then he told her something that really made her angry.

"Your place is with your husband. You are welcome to stay the day out, but by night, I expect you to go. I will hitch up the team and drive you to the railroad station."

"Well," she thought, "he don't need to worry, I won't stay where I'm not wanted."

She lived through the rest of the day, but she didn't enjoy it much. She felt too much like an outsider. She was glad when it was six o'clock and she could go to the station. She didn't even feel like talking to him, but she did kiss him goodbye.

When she got back home, she worried about how she would tell her husband she had changed her mind and she was back. She looked through the window and she could see him inside. He was sitting by a table, bent over, with his head on his arms. Suddenly she felt sorry for him. She hurried inside and put her arms around him. He was so happy to see her. He thought she came back just because she wanted to. Then she was glad she did. She was glad her father had said what he did. She did love him!

Mom didn't forget the thing she had learned from her father. Later on, she used it on her mother-in-law. I remembered that day well.

I'd had a happy day at school. I must have been in about the second grade. When I hurried home to tell my Mom about all the things we were doing, I got a surprise. When I opened the door, I saw my Grandma Freshwater sitting on the couch talking to my mother. The reason I was so surprised was that this Grandma never did come to see us. We always went to see her. My other Grandma came, because she lived closer, and also Mom said she didn't have a man to worry about like our other Grandma. Besides, Grandma Freshwater was always so busy. She

helped mothers when they had little babies. Besides that, our Grandpa Freshwater had a store and he was always busy, too.

Grandma Freshwater was like someone out of a story book, small and neat, with brown hair held on top of her head by pretty combs with sparkles in them. Her eyes and smile were so friendly, and she held out her arms to me.

I ran to her, and her arms folded around me. She felt all warm and soft and smelled like roses. Grandma always wore perfume. I could see the little white pearl buttons on the front of her silk blouse, and the lace on the collar. Grandma liked pretty things when she wasn't working. I knew if she stood up to walk, her long skirt would rustle softly, on account of the taffeta petticoat underneath.

She held me back, at arms length for a moment saying, "Leola, you look more like your dear father every time I see you."

Lots of people said that, and I wasn't sure I liked it. After all, he was a man, and I was just a little girl. Mom said it was because I had his black eyebrows.

I said to my Grandma, "I don't have blue eyes like my father."

"No, you don't," she said, taking me in her arms again. "You have my eyes, hazel."

I looked at my Grandma's eyes. It was true, and it was the first time I had noticed. After that I didn't mind my eyes so much, and I didn't care if they were kind of green. On Grandma they looked pretty because they were always so full of friendly crinkles, and I always knew she was listening to me, just because her eyes told me so.

We had our supper together, and I got to sit by Grandma. After supper was over, she showed me some of the treasures in her suitcase. One thing I remember quite well was small triangle-shaped pieces of velvet. Grandma showed me how she stitched these together with tiny hand stitching. Then when she had four or five together, she would embroidery across the joined parts in something she called a feather-stitch. She said this would make it look prettier, lay flatter, and also it would be stronger. She was making a cover for the couch, so it would look better. We had that cover many years.

That's one reason why I was so surprised the next day when I came home from school and saw Grandma sitting on the edge of a chair, just waiting to go somewhere, all dressed up, her coat and all.

She said, "I just waited until you came, child. Your father is going with me to the station. Would you like to come, too?"

I felt so disappointed, "Why?" I asked.

"Lots of babies getting themselves born," she said, and I just sighed, and wondered why everybody was so quiet.

I went to the station with my father and Grandma. I saw her get on the train, and it all started to feel like some kind of a dream. I still felt sad. I even wondered if I would ever see her again. Of course I did – many times. But it was always at her house. I don't think she ever came to our house again. Of course she only lived a few more years after that. I was still in grade school. They didn't let me go to her funeral. They thought it was too sad for me because I was just little. But many times I walked

down to where I saw her get on the train, and I pretended she had just gone home again.

Well, when I was asking my Mom about her father, she remembered to tell me why my Grandma went home that day. She said she'd had a quarrel with her husband and she was leaving him to go to live with her son and his family – only my Mom had different ideas, just like her father had.

She said, "I loved my mother-in-law very much, and I knew she loved me like a daughter, but I knew it would be hard for us to live together. We had such different ideas about so many things. So I told her, like my father told me, that she was welcome to stay for a visit, but her place was with her husband. She got just as upset as I did. But she thanked me later, just like I thanked my father."

Then my Mom said something I've never forgotten, "You see, no matter how much work there is going on in a bee-hive, there's only room for one queen."

Chapter 10: Baptism

I remember how I kept wanting to be eight years old. I wanted to get baptized and it was how old you have to be in our church. Many of my cousins and friends were already baptized but I have to keep waiting to get old enough. For a long time I had been listening to my parents and teachers tell me about jesus, and I believed in him and wanted to belong to him. Besides that, I had heard stories of Joseph Smith seeing the Father, and Jesus, when he prayed about it. I liked to hear about angel Moroni and the golden plates. I really believed these things were true, and I wanted to belong to his church.

One day my papa came home from one of his church meetings. He said the next baptism date would be on my birthday, when I turned eight. He asked me if I'd like to get baptized then. I was so happy that I didn't have to wait even one more day.

The boys would wear the white pants and shirts. The girls would wear white knight gowns, with panties underneath. Mama

made me a new one out of her whitest flour sack, she wrapped the night gown and panties in a big pile to keep them special for my big day.

On my eighth birthday I was baptized into the Mormon church. It was just a short walk from our house that day. The sun was shining and it seems like all of the grass and flowers and trees were prettier colors than I could ever seen them. We walked around the regular chapel to the little building behind. Inside the little building was a cement place filled with water, like a little pool of water with steps going down to it. But first we went to the places where we could change clothes. The mothers went with the girls. I guess the boys had their dads on their side of the room.

After we changed our clothes, we sat on a bench. I remember they talked to us and had a prayer, but I was getting a little worried about going in the water. I wished my papa could do it, but it was another young man there in the water. We had to wait until they called our name, and then they called mine.

I went down in the water one step at a time until the water came clear up to my elbows. I was starting to wish I knew how to swim, but I didn't. I knew I would have to get covered all over with that water, and if they didn't cover all of me then they would have to do with over. But I knew the man who did it would hold me tight and not let me get lost in all the water. He'd lift me up again.

The young man smiled and told me how to hold his hand. Then he said the prayer, and down in the water I went. I came up again really easy, and I wondered why I'd been afraid. Then

suddenly I went down again. I guess the first time, part of me didn't get covered, but the second time it was all right.

After I was baptized, they ask me to sit on a little stool by the side of the pool. Then they put their hands on my head and confirmed me a member of the church of jesus christ of latter day saints, and told me to receive the holy ghost. I felt so happy. Now at last I could be a member. I could feel like I was really starting to grow up and be accountable and not just be a little kid anymore.

I thought sure I'd see God and Jesus just like Joseph Smith did. I didn't, so I started wondering about the Holy Ghost. I wanted something special to happen, like seeing an angel, or hearing a voice. I didn't know then that these things cannot happen right away no matter how much we believe.

Our faith needs developing. It needs testing and trial, and if you continue faithful, you will know! It happened on my birthday, and after the meeting, we went home and had a good dinner and it was a day with a special feeling. I didn't realize then that God can't go around appearing to everyone who likes the idea. He'd never have time for anything else. But He does have time to love us. He loved us so much he sent his only begotten son into the world... a gift few of us understand until we have had children of our own and know how great the love of a parent is for a child. Then we know how much he loved his son, and his other children.

My parents were so proud of me. So were all the relatives, including my Grandma Jex. Mamma called me her little Mormon girl, and Papa said from now on when they old how many

members there were in our church it meant they had counted me too.

My Grandma Jex came to eat dinner with us. She told me that when she joined the church, she was the only one in her whole family, and that the rest of her family wouldn't even be friends with her anymore. But her husband believed it too. So they got on a ship and came across the ocean and started their own family here, and she still loved the church and she was glad she joined. Later on, she said some of her family joined, too. Some of them came to America too.

I remember how glad I was that day, that my Grandma came from England to America. That way, my Mamma could be an american and so could I.

Papa said I would always remember when I was baptized, and I do, every year when it is my birthday, and I am always happy when I remember that special day. I knew I was doing something to please my heavenly father and jesus. I wanted to always please them and never do anything wrong. I feel sad when I forgot, and then I remembered to pray, and always they helped me to do better next time.

Chapter December and the Joy of Remembering

Once again I am a child, hurrying in from the cold. It is warm in our home, and there's always something good cooking. It smells so good, vegetable soup, or beans with a ham bone. Maybe even cookies or a fruit cake this time of year.

Mom is singing in the kitchen. I hurry in to tell her about the school party coming up. I need to take a present and I know we don't have much money.

"Don't you worry," Mom tells me. "I always have a few dimes for things we really need."

She puts her arm around me, and I know I won't have to feel embarrassed, without a present to give.

I remember how our family sang together. Somebody would start humming a tune, and soon everyone else joined in. It didn't matter when it was, while we were busy cleaning house, or on a Sunday afternoon after church... or especially now when we could sing the Christmas songs. How my little brother loved Jolly Old St. Nicholas. Mom liked O Little Town of Bethlehem, and all of us loved Silent Night, and we did it in harmony, too.

Mom always had a jar of fruit or jelly wrapped up pretty for us to take to a neighbor, and sometimes we'd find the reddest shiniest apples to put with it, or she'd make a few cookies for us to cut out and put colored frosting on.

Trimming a tree was a big project but a fun-time thing, with popped corn strung along a string, and then of course the colored paper chains. Sometimes we eve wrapped empty boxes and pretended they were presents under the tree.

But always the last night before Christmas was best, with our Dad telling us stories, all about the Holy Night, and then about Santa Clause, until all of it seemed wrapped up in magic, and we would marvel that this was happening to us. The stars always seemed brighter. We always wished we could have seen that one bright star that meant Jesus was born. Then we'd think of

the magic of being remembered by Santa, and even if it was only one toy, or even just candy and nuts it would be enough. I'm so glad I knew the magic of Christmas.

About this time my father went to work for the Union Pacific railroad. What a lot of wonderful experiences this brought to me. He would get free passes, and Mom would pack up the four youngsters and we'd travel to wherever my father was stationed. I had just finished third grade and Dad was stationed in Nevada, so Mom got passes to go to Las Vegas (it was a lot different then). I remember helping Mom with the little ones, getting them on the train, getting them settled in our seat. We'd turn one backwards so we could face each other. I saw most of the country riding backwards and always saw where I'd been but sometimes when a little one went to sleep, I could get on the other seat and could see what was ahead because my sister got sea-sick the other way. Mom always packed lunches. Each sandwich or cookie individually wrapped and she made us think it was a special surprise made just for us. But how I longed to be one of the rich people that went to the diner car. I was always taking little ones to the rest room or bringing them drinks or telling them stories. It was fun. We were on a great adventure.

We were all so glad to see Dad waiting for us. He took us to a hotel and then to a place to eat. I called it a calfy.

One thing about traveling, some children take to it like ducks to water. They can never get enough of seeing new sites, and new people and places. I was like that when I was little, when

my father worked on the railroad. I gloried in each new adventure that our brief passes brought to us.

Ruby was a little big for it. She was always saying, "When do we go back home?"

Mom would always explain, "*This* is our home for now!"

Well, she'd be quiet for a minute, then she'd remember again that she didn't have her old friends or her toys, and she'd miss being with them, and she'd say in bewilderment, "But where *is* home?"

Mom would say, "Home is where you belong, and where somebody loves you." Then she'd smile and put her arms around her and kiss her.

Is home a time, or a place? Or just a feeling? Or is it a hallowed memory?

When I remembered home, it was momma sitting in the kitchen, cooking good things, and the air always smelled good. She was sewing pretty dresses for me to wear. Or she was rocking a baby to sleep, or fixing daddy's lunch and kissing him goodbye as he went to work.

Or she was kissing him home at night. Always there was love, and food enough even for extra guests, and with good talk at the table.

And singing. I loved to hear her sing as she worked. It seemed like she was always singing. Then she would help us with the clearing up and the dishes when we'd all go in the other room and there was time for reading and lessons, and bedtime stories. There was always time for help with our prayers.

My mom used to say she enjoyed doing dishes, and I'd groan. She'd explain, "They always look so pretty in the cupboard, and it's nice to have things so neat and clean." Well, it's true, to a point. It is nice to have the crappy stuff done.

And yet I loved her and respected her. She was a very special home maker. I think her main talents were her good cheer and optimism. I miss my mom. We never understood each other too well, but there was a deep and sincere love between us, and a lot of respect. I'm so thankful I could grow up as her child.

I'll always remember how she loved our dad, and honored him as head of the family, even if she did have to take over financial management of a lot of family problems. She still showed him her love and great respect as a priesthood holder.

Strange, how years later I remember different situations she faced and I marvel how well they got along. They both had a deep love for their Creator, and were so humble and sincere.

I remember how they loved their children. We felt so safe, so secure.

Chapter 11: You Took Me In

At that time (about 1922), Las Vegas had one corner of the town just for negroes. It was called the "colored section," and wouldn't you know that was the only place our father could find a house for us to rent. We were glad to get it after being in a hotel where they didn't like kids. Besides, Dad took us out to breakfast and he said those hot cakes cost him almost a days wages.

Well, I met my first negro, a girl about my age named Juanita. She was a pretty little girl with beautiful brown eyes and curly hair. I told her I wished I had eyes like hers. Neither of us seemed to think much about the difference in coloring until we were washing up for lunch. Mom often let my friends eat with me. For some reason we noticed then that our hands were different. I gave her the laundry soap and a scrub brush but it wouldn't "go" the color of my hands. I tried to help her. Mom came in and said, "What are you trying to do with that poor child?"

I said, "The brown won't come off."

"Of course not," she said, "that is the color it is, that's the way she was made. Just like your eyes are not the same color or your hair. Well so your skin is different too, so don't worry about it."

And we didn't.

I found that there were other differences, too. Juanita's big brother played a guitar and I loved to sit and listen, but he told me one day that I'd better go home as he didn't want any white kids hanging around. I felt strangely hurt, but I went home. The next Sunday we heard them singing in their church. How I wanted to go there and join them, but Mom said we'd better not, on account we were the different ones, being the only whites. They might not want us. I was puzzled then as now. How I wished for more color in my skin. I hated being so pale. Didn't they know it wasn't my fault how the Lord had made me?

I remember sitting on our front step hearing them sing, and I thought it was some of the most beautiful music I'd ever heard. I still feel that way when I hear a negro singing about the Lord. I knew He is their Lord, too... and He loved everybody, and cares what happens to all of us. Didn't we both believe in the same Lord?

But there was Juanita, my friend. Neither of us minded about color differences. What a special friend—one I could ask for dinner. Juanita and I had such good times together. We even went exploring down the Red Light district one day, not that we saw anything (but now I know why the ladies in their kimonos were so angry with us and told us to go away). Then our mothers were even angrier and told us to never go there again!

I wanted Juanita to come to church with me, but Mom said she went to a different church right across the street from us, and Juanita thought they might not like her. I don't think they would have cared. Some Mormons are negro. They can't hold the priesthood, but neither can women. I think about her sometimes. I did like her.

I hadn't thought much about how Mormons are considered different by some people until that summer.

Las Vegas was just a little town. Our house was at the edge of town by a desert.

I could look down the one long dusty road that cut through the desert, but all I could see was sage brush, cactus, and sand. Papa had told me to not go down that road or I might get lost and maybe they'd never find me. I didn't see how I could get lost when I had a road to follow back. But Papa said lots of people did. He said there wasn't any water out there anywhere. People could get dry and thirsty in the sunshine. They'd look for water and see a mirage and then get lost.

"What's a mirage?" I asked him.

"A mirage is like seeing a picture of water, a lake or river," he said, "only it seems so real people follow it to find water. Then it disappears and they are lost."

I could see how this could be so, and every day I looked down the road to see if I could see a mirage, too. One day I thought I saw a rock far down in the middle of the road, but it seemed to be moving and I wondered if it could be a person.

I called to my sister Ruby and asked, "Is that someone walking down there?"

She looked to where I was pointing and said, "Maybe. I'll go ask Mamma to look."

Mamma shaded her eyes with her hand and slowly nodded, saying, "Someone seems to be in trouble. You girls stay here and I'll go and see. And Leola, listen for Irvin."

I knew she was worried about our little brother Irvin. He hadn't been well. He kept getting "the runs" just like Summer Complaint, only it didn't go away.

We watched as Mamma went all the way. We saw her bend over to help someone stand up, and it looked like a lady, a taller lady than Mamma. They started towards us very slowly, and when they were near enough, Mamma called out for me to bring some water.

When I came out of the house with the glass of water, I could see they were almost home. Papa had gone out to meet them. He had just got home from work. He went on down the road, but the women came over and sat in the shade, and she was glad to get the water.

I helped Mamma get supper ready while the lady rested. She looked like somebody's Grandma and I felt sorry for her. She looked kind of old, and so tired.

We had supper on the table by the time the men got back, so we all sat down to eat. They talked about what was wrong with the car, and how they couldn't fix it tonight, so Mamma told them they could stay at our place.

I wondered where they would sleep. We didn't have any extra beds. But Mamma took bedding from her bed, and a blanket from our bed, so they could stretch out on the floor.

Mamma told us we could sleep in our clothes if we wanted to, to keep warmer, all but our shoes, of course. Sometimes it got quite cool before morning.

Papa said it was nice – it would be his day off and he could help with the car. I didn't hear the men get up and go next morning. I just heard the ladies talking in the kitchen. Mamma was telling her about Irvin not feeling well.

"It might be the change in water," the Grandma-lady was saying.

"I thought of that and tried boiling it," Mamma said, "but it didn't help any."

The other lady said, "It could be a touch of alkali got in the water, and you can't boil that out. Doesn't hurt some, but others, especially little ones..."

"I guess I could try just canned fruit juice and soda water. He likes root beer."

I was about to turn over to go back to sleep when I heard something that woke me up.

"I just don't know how to thank you folks," the lady was saying, "I was so afraid we'd run into some of those awful Mormons."

My heart almost stopped beating. What could Mamma say now?

"Oh," the lady said in a scared sounding voice, "I've heard some awful stories..."

"You have?" Mamma asked, surprised-like, "Well, I am a Mormon."

It was awfully quiet for a minute, then the lady said, almost like he was crying, "But I was a stranger and you took me it... you fed me and gave me a bed." Then she went on in almost a whisper, "You are a real follower of Christ."

Mamma said just as quietly, "I try to be."

She said she'd never believe bad things about Mormons again.

Afterwards, Mama said she was glad we had a chance to help those folks. That way we learned how water can sometimes hurt people, and Irvin did get better. Mamma always said you get help when you need it, if you're not afraid to give when there's a need.

Chapter 12: Papa's Bargains

It was a time of dreams and make-believe, and Papa was my special hero. On magic carpets we traveled to other times and other places, through stories and music, and the real world around us always seemed a little easier to live in, after a magic journey with him.

Mamma could never understand his dreaminess, as she called it, or the reason he always liked the jingle of coins in his pocket. I knew. It helped him feel good. He knew that at any moment he might find a bargain, something he could afford to buy. Like the long walk we took home one night when he stopped to buy an ice cream cone for each of us, let us choose the flavor, and gave it with a flourish, explaining, "Even the richest people could not have finer tasting ice cream."

Papa was always bringing home bargains. They were trial of Mamma's life. She tried so hard to make the money reach. It never did. Somebody always needed shoes, and we were always out of something. Sometimes there weren't any pay days. But

when Papa did get paid, he always gave it all to Mamma, all but a few coins to jingle in him pockets, in case he saw a bargain.

One day he came home beaming. He'd really found something this time. All four of us gathered around his big sack, and he took out a huge, wide-rimmed fur hat for each of us. We were delighted. They were too big, and they wobbled on our heads as we marched around the room.

Mamma laughed so hard she had to sit down and wipe her eyes, but finally she managed to say, "Fur hats in summer, and a mile too big. Where did you ever get them?"

Papa looked a little hurt as he said, "They only cost ten cents each, an auction of Gay Nineties show stuff." He hesitated then went on, "But look at these..."

We gathered around again as he took out some old phonograph records saying, "Don't drop or they'll break." He read the top one, "Humoresque, this is the story of a man chasing his girl around a table trying to get a kiss. Now let's listen."

As we listened to the fiddle sound of fast then slow music, we could imagine the teasing, and started dancing in our fur hats again, and ended up all laughing.

The next record was called Listening. We imagined sounds of crickets, and summer, and couples dancing in the moonlight. At least I did.

Then there was a record I can't forget. It was about a girl complaining of all the things she didn't have and how she wished she had some money. Someone answers her, telling her the things around her that are free, that money can't buy. It was a beautiful song. I wish I could remember all of it. The chorus went like this:

There are some things my dear, you can't buy, he replied...
You can't buy the sunshine or flowers,
You can't buy the moonlight or dawn,
You can't buy your youth when you're growing old,
Or your life when the heartbeat is gone...
You can't buy your way into heaven,
Nor wealth, or no power, I'm told,
And when you've lost your mother,
You can't buy another,
Though you have all the world and it's gold...

("If You Had All The World And It's Gold," Words and Music by Harry Edelheit, Bartley Costello and Al Piantadosi)

I still remember the impression that record made. I think how many things we can't buy—not friendship, not love, not loyalty, and I think of another power I shared with my father:

"To strive for riches, glory fame, that all the world may know your name, Or proudly sit upon a throne, means little if you sit alone."

I'm glad my father taught me to value the friendly people around me, to take joy in little things, to strive always to be happy. Life's better that way.

A very special bargain might be just around the corner, if you just have the eyes to see it, the ears to hear it, and just maybe it will leave a lasting impression of happiness to someone.

Chapter 13: California

"Someday," Papa was always saying, "I'm going to take all of you to California."

I don't know if Mamma ever believed him, but it was pleasant hearing about it, especially on cold wintry days.

"We'll get out of this cold," Papa would say. "We will go where the sun is shining, and flowers bloom all year. Oranges grow on trees there, and you can pick them and eat them any time."

I thought how nice it would be to have an orange sometime besides Christmas day.

"Then we will all go to see the ocean," he'd say, that far-away look in his blue eyes, and I could almost see the waves come in on the sandy beach as he talked about it. I could feel the soft breeze on my face and smell the salt of the ocean and hear the seagulls making their mournful cries as they circled overhead.

"As far as you can see, there's nothing but water," he'd say. "Then at night when the sun goes down, it just slips into the

water, and makes streaks of red across the waves. You won't ever forget it."

To me it wasn't a matter of whether we'd go or not, but when. Papa made it that real.

Now at last the time had come. How happy dad was to break the news that he had been transferred to California. A letter came from him and Mamma showed me the free railroad passes. I had helped her when I was eight and we had gone to Nevada. I guess now that I was ten I could still help with three younger ones and a suitcase and trunk. I was still glad when Papa got on the train to help us that last part of the way. It was always a little lonely waiting in the railroad station with the children and luggage while Mamma found us a place to stay.

Uncle Dick came to meet us, too. He was afraid we would get lost in Las Angeles. I was glad he knew his way around. I had never seen so many people all at once in my life and I had never seen more than a few cars traveling at the same time on a road.

"Is there a funeral on today?" Mamma asked as we rode along with the line of cars.

"No," Uncle Dick said, "What made you think there was?"

"Well," she said, "There's so many cars all following us."

Uncle Dick laughed and laughed, and I didn't think it funny when he said, "If that's the case, we have funerals every day around here."

We sat pretty quiet for awhile, marveling at all the flowers and the palm trees. Then Irvin saw a plane and got all excited. Uncle Dick pulled off the side of the road so we could watch it come in. We had never been that close to a plane before. Again

we all marveled that a machine could really fly in the sky and come down again.

I still remember the lemon tree in Uncle Dick's backyard. You really could pick lemons for your own lemonade. The fig tree was more fun. You could jump from a place they had made, grab the lower limb of the fig tree, and do tricks on it.

Mamma loved the giant geraniums and Cala lilies by her door. They were ten times bigger than the ones on Mamma's window sills back home.

We didn't get to see the ocean yet. Papa had to get back to work and we would stay with Uncle Dick for awhile. He said he'd come to get us by the 24th.

The 24th of July was near and no one seemed to be doing anything about it. Mamma wasn't sewing me a new dress. No one talked about a parade or covered wagons or pioneers or anything like that and I was really puzzled. Still, I knew Papa would be back by then and I was sure it would all turn out right.

He told us we were going to see the ocean at last. Mamma packed a lunch and told me to get our swimming suits together and a towel or tow. We started out walking. Papa never owned a car. Everybody had somebody by the hand, so nobody could get lost.

I thought we would see white sand with nobody there but us. I saw dirty sand, full of people and blankets and umbrellas everywhere until there wasn't much room for us to walk. And everywhere people were noisy, and yelling, and selling things.

"Isn't it exciting?" Papa asked.

I nodded. I hoped nobody would step on me, and I wondered when the parade would start and where. Maybe Papa was saving it for a surprise. Maybe it was at night.

It's strange but I really don't remember the great thrill of seeing the ocean for the first time. I do remember the joy of seeing it later. As far as I could see, blue-green water coming in on foamy waves. I remember watching as the sun slipped into it, sinking into the water like a golden ball, just the way Papa had told us it would, and it left streaks of red and gold across the waves. It was true I'd never forget it.

We stopped once, where a crowd was collecting, to watch a man building in the sand. Papa said he was an artist. We watched as he formed the wet sand into a person that started to look more and more like a lady. Then it looked so real, as if a lady had just been there taking a nap and the sand blew over and covered her, bu you could see the shape of her legs and arms and even her face and hair.

People started to throw nickels and dimes down by the sand lady. Papa gave us some pennies and when we thew them down the artist looked up. He smiled at us, and we knew he was one who liked children. I was wishing I could learn to be a sand-artist.

Mamma said Papa should go and rent us an umbrella. He said they cost too much, but he got it anyway, so we'd have a place in the shade to rest, and to eat our lunch.

We had just been there a few minutes when Irvin, my little brother, said he had to go to the rest room. Mamma pointed out

the building where I'd find it. The only trouble was, it cost money and I didn't have a dime.

It was quiet in there. No one else seemed to be around. I noticed there was an opening under each door, and I knew it would be no problem for me to scoot under the door and open it from the inside. I hadn't counted on anyone being in there.

She was big, and she was fat, and she was angry. I didn't stop to hear the words she was spitting out at me, I ducked out quicker than I'd got in. I grabbed my crying brother and we got out of there.

By the time we got back to get a dime, it was too late. Mamma told us not to worry. We could get on our suits and go in the water. She'd have dry clothes for him when he got out to get dressed. Mamma always packed extras.

The first gulp of salty water surprised me. I hadn't counted on it tasting like that. I choked and strangled and finally got to breathing naturally again. I decided I liked swimming better in the irrigation ditches back home when Papa took his watering turn. At least there, you only tasted mud once in awhile. Mostly the water was good enough to drink.

Mamma called us to come in, to get something to eat, and after we ate the sandwiches she said, "It would be nice if we had some ice cream cones."

Papa went to buy some, and I went to help him carry them back. It was funny seeing Papa try to dig in his pocket to get the money and still holding cones, so I took all of them until he had them paid for. Then he carried two in each hand, and I carried one in each hand and we started back.

There was only one big trouble. All the Umbrellas on the beach looked alike, and they all had the wrong people underneath when we looked under them.

The sun got hotter and hotter and the ice cream started to melt and run down between our fingers. Papa would lick the first one hand and then another. I wondered if the ice cream melting from mine would run clear to my elbows before we found our umbrella.

"Look for your Mamma's yellow hat," he said. We were both sure we'd be able to see it. It was so bright and had such a wide rim to keep the sun off.

Suddenly I saw a yellow hat in the crowd of people and said, "There it is."

"She's coming to meet us," he agreed, and we hurried faster.

Just as we got close enough to call out, she turned. She hadn't seen us after all.

"Hey you, Yellow Hat," Papa called out, and surprisingly the hat stopped.

We hurried up and Papa started handing her the sticky cones as he said, "About time we found you, or there wouldn't be anything left."

The woman under the yellow had snorted and turned away, just as Papa realized it wasn't Mamma after all. But it was okay because Mamma had seen what happened and she came to meet us. She was laughing like everything. Mamma told the story many times how Papa never really looked at her, but he must

have been color blind besides. She did have dark skin. But so did a lot of other people, and I never noticed either.

Besides, it really was a big yellow hat. And who cares the color of skin. I felt a little resentful that she had laughed. It wasn't any fun to feel lost, and with melting ice cream cones besides.

The cones were good. So was the rest of our lunch. But after awhile we got tired of the sand fleas and the sunburn and we decided to go home.

All the way walking home I thought of how it was back home in Utah and the things I was missing. All the relatives would be gathering to se the parade and then they'd go to the park and hear the band play. They'd drink root beer from bottles and trade sandwiches and cookies until everyone had all they wanted to eat. Then the older cousins and friends would go to an afternoon movie. I started to feel very sorry for myself, and especially because no one else had seemed to care.

After supper, while Mamma was still busy inside with the little ones going to bed, Papa and I sat out of the porch side by side in the swing. It was coolish with the breeze from the ocean and I cuddled up against him.

Gathering all my courage I finally decided to say something about my sad feelings. “I thought sure we'd go to see the parade.”

Papa seemed a little surprised.

“Parade?” Then he went on more thoughtfully, “But of course you'd think there would be a parade. This is the twenty fourth. But there are a lot more that are not Mormons.”

“How come?”

He was quiet for a long time. When he talked again it was softly. "You've lived a long time among your own kind of people, and that's nice. You have a right to think and believe the way you want to. So do other people have this right. Some people haven't even heard of Mormons yet. They are still good people the same as we are."

I was starting to understand what he meant, and it meant the world was a lot bigger than it used to be. It was like the first day of school with all the new things happening, like having a world of family and a world of school and now it was a whole world of Mormons and another full of people that weren't Mormons.

"It's different," he said, as if reading my thoughts. "People don't seem to know about the pioneers or covered wagons. At least they don't celebrate the same way, but they are still people who love the flag and their country, and I think they do have a day when they celebrate the day they became a state, too. We'll have to find out about that."

Papa had made it sound exciting. He was always interested in finding out new things. A whole world seemed to open before me. I could still have the things I knew about Utah, an the Mormons, and all the good things, but I could also reach out and widen the circle... All those things I had and could always claim. Now I could reach out for more. There was no limits to Papa's horizons, or to mine.

When my father was transferred, and had to move his family to Kelso California, I was in the fourth grade.

I'll never forget how forlorn I felt as we looked down the one lane dusty road towards the red one-roomed schoolhouse. I held my fathers hand tight as he took me to school that first day.

The room was big, at least it was in my eyes. And at one end there were about thirty desks, filled with all sizes of children.

They turned to look at me, and I wanted to run and hide. But the teacher smiled and came to meet us. I liked Miss Berry right away. Maybe it was the way she smiled, or the way her voice was so soft when she explained how she had children here from the first to eighth grade.

Or maybe it was because she put her arm around my shoulders and led me through the fourth grade.

Mom loved the palm trees in California. Ruby and I loved the sand on the seashore. She said, "I wish we could move to a place where we'd have all kinds of sand."

I said, "Yes, but without these dumb sand fleas."

Well, we did. We went to a small place called Kelso. As near as I can remember it was only three or four blocks long, with one street and about thirty company houses, a round house for the trains, and a one-roomed schoolhouse. Miss Sperry taught about twenty children, from the first to eighth grade. My sister Ruby was in second and was having a hard time. I helped her, so did Mom and Dad..."

We'd all sing together and we'd always have an opening prayer and we'd have our play times and noon hour together. She had us do lots of reading and desk work, while she took three or four up front to read or to work out problems. We had four

fourth-graders, so she'd take all of us at once and then give us something to study while she went on with other groups. When our few minutes came to read or show our problems etc. we'd really had the time to study it out in our minds, and everyone seemed to be doing fine. She was young, enjoyed her work, and all of us loved her. We had a glorious Halloween party, with the whole town invited. It was fun to have games and a dance for all the people, young and old. There was a feeling of belonging, of good fellowship.

In school we were singing Thanksgiving songs like, *Over the River and Through the Woods,* but it didn't feel like Thanksgiving time to me. For one thing, it was too hot, and for another thing, it was too far from home.

Papa was working for the railroad in Kelso. I looked down the one street of our town as I walked home from school. I had counted its thiry houses many times. Ours was the last house just before you get to the sand dunes. As I looked now at the tannish-colored sand, there semmed to be heat waves rising from it, making the low hills of sand blur against the blue sky.

Suddenly I felt a longing to be back in Utah, where I could see the snow-capped Rockies. There might even be snow in the valley by now. Sometimes we had it by Thanksgiving. Then we could hitch up the old work team of horses to the bob-sled and really go over the river and through the woods.

Of course, we wouldn't go to Grandma's house, because she usually came to our house, unless of course she had to give somebody else a turn. Then we woud get another widow, or some

old neighbor. But whoever it was, it was fun to listen to their stories. I wondered if we'd have any guests this year.

Papa brought up the subject at supper, saying, "Thanksgiving is coming. Who shall we ask over?"

"No relatives, for sure," I said, "Nor no old people around here, either."

"True," Papa said, "Mostly young families around here. There is this one other Mormon family..."

"They have their own plans," Mamma said. "A married son coming home..."

Papa turned and looked right at me and asked, "Who would you like to have?"

"Well," I hesitated. "There's this girl in my room, Cleo. Nobody seems to like her."

"Cause she's fat," my little sister Ruby said. "All she does is eat."

"Only 'cause she don't know what else to do, 'cause she's so lonesome," I said.

Mamma spoke up, "I know her mother. Kind of shy. It just might be a good idea."

"Sure," Papa said, "best way to get friendly and acquainted is around the table."

So, it was settled. I told Cleo the next day and she was excited. So was her Mamma. Our mothers got together to plan the food, and it started feeling more like a holiday.

Papa decided we should eat outside. Our kitchen was too little. He took two tables out and put some lumber across the top, so it looked like one table. Then Mamma opened up a new white

sheet and I helped her spread it over the top. It looked nice. Then we carried out the chairs, and some of us would have to sit on wooden boxes.

It was a nice day, not too hot, and not too cold, and it almost seemed like we were having a picnic, especially when Cleo and her folks carried over food in baskets.

When all the food was on the table and all the people were sitting down, my little brother Irvin said, "Let me ask the blessing. I can do it faster."

Mamma shook her head and said, "Not today. Don't you remember Papa always asks the prayer on Thanksgiving day?"

But he was kind of little yet. I guess he didn't know.

Papa always said the prayer so low you had to be really quiet to hear it. But you just knew he was talking right to the Lord and you felt like the Lord was standing there listening to every word. Papa was thanking Him for our many blessings, and asking Him to help us find those who were less fortunate... to bless those away...

As I listened I heard a bird sing, and I felt the soft breeze against my cheek. I knew it was special today, and I wanted to always remember how special it felt to be where I was.

I really don't remember much what we ate, I know Mamma baked some potatoes, scooped them out, and after she mashed it all up, she piled it back in the potato shells again. That way she didn't have to make gravy. Mamma hated to make gravy. It always went lumpy. I know whatever we had it tasted so good we were all filled up and I hated to think about helping with the

dishes. Mamma said I didn't have to . I could take the children and go to the sand dunes to play for awhile.

We has such fun sliding down the sand hills, rolling in the sand, piling it on each other. We didn't have to worry about our hair or our clothes because there was no school tomorrow. Cleo said it was the most fun day she had ever had.

That night, after they were all gone, I told Papa, "I'm glad we tried to make somebody happier today. That way I got happier, too."

And he knew what I meant.

That's why it was a different Thanksgiving. I had learned the secret.

Chapter 14: Christmas Without Snow

On Sundays we couldn't go to our own church. There were only two Mormon families. I guess there were one or two families in about every church represented, so they decided to just hold "Bible meeting" for most of us believed in the Bible. They'd take turns being the reader, or officiator.

In Sunday school, mostly for children, we learned all about Jesus and they gave us picture cards with some of his sayings printed on the back. I really liked these. I loved the Sunday school classes. It was always stories about Old Testament figures, or stories about Jesus, and we'd get a printed picture of the story to take home a small card, picture on one side, story on the other. I treasured these. We'd sing songs we all knew.

About the sand? Ruby and I had our wish. Kelso had plenty of it, and no fleas.

It didn't look like Christmas without any snow. My new friends didn't even know what snow was. And when I told them

Santa couldn't come in the sleigh here, so he'd probably have to use a plane, they laughed at me. I felt foolish, and I longed for the home we'd left behind.

Then one day the teacher said she thought it would be nice if we had a special Christmas program for our parents. She would take it straight from the bible. Some would read the story, and some would sing, and some would have special parts.

All the girls wanted to be Mary. They coaxed and pleaded for the part, but Miss Berry said she would have to think about that for a while.

More than anything, I wanted to be Mary. I daydreamed about it in school. I'd walk home the way I thought Mary would walk. I'd look in the mirror each night to see if I was really starting to look like the pictures I'd seen of Mary. I wished my face wasn't so round, or my cheeks so pink. Then I'd cover my brown hair with Momma's blue shawl and practice my Mary smile until I was sure I had it down perfect.

It was a blow when Miss Berry didn't choose me. My eyes kept stinging, and I was sure I'd start crying right away.

She said of all the girls Maria looked more like a Jew because she had dark eyes and hair. I wanted to tell the teacher that the Bible didn't say anything about the color of Mary's hair, but I was afraid my voice was shake, and I knew it wouldn't do any good anyhow.

Miss Berry said she wanted me to be one of the readers.

Great. I couldn't even be a shepherd or a wise man.

"Now, it was a real honor," Miss Berry said, "to be chosen to be one of the readers."

She seemed so happy sewing up my angel costume. she wanted me to be one of the readers.

I felt sort of grumpy. I thought my costume looked like a night gown. They wouldn't even make me wings, because Miss Berry wasn't sure if angels had wings.

But she did let me have long flowing sleeves, and a halo made out of tinsel, to wear in my hair. All the angels wore tinsel halos, but he teacher wrapped three rows of tinsel in my hair, because I was the main messenger angel.

I didn't mind if the tinsel scratched my head a little. After all, my head hurt already from the curlers being so tight. But when my hair was all combed and shiny and curly, and Mom called me her special little angel, the magic started happening, and I forgot about how some people might think I was wearing a nighty. I waved my arms back and forth grandly, pretending both sleeves were wings.

The schoolhouse smelled of pine from the tiny tree in the corner. It had decorations of colored paper and popcorn strings, and cranberries on it. There was a sack of packages behind the tree, a the table piled high with good food people had brought, and a stack of paper plates and cups for helping yourself after the program.

Everybody was smiling and talking, and everybody crowded in and filled up the school with folded up chairs. Some children sat on the floor until it was their part.

I helped sing the songs, and I felt all warm inside me. I wasn't jealous of Mary anymore. She would have to worry about if Mrs. Jones' new baby would cry or not, and if he'd come

unwrapped from all those swaddling clothes. Poor Mary, but she did look lovely in Momma's blue shawl.

It was quiet with the prayer and the singing. And when they started singing, "Far, Far Away on Judea's Plains," I knew my turn was coming up.

All the angels crowded around me, waiting.

Then came the moment I can never forget; the music fading out; the sudden hush in the audience; the opening of the bible; the stepping out front; looking down at the page; saying the words I had memorized.

"Fear not, for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

And suddenly it dawned on my. I was giving the message. I was telling what Christmas was all about. Tears came to my eyes. Baby Jesus was really here! And Christmas was just getting started.

Every year I think about it, and every year I feel the magic of it. Maybe the rest of the year we can think of ordinary things, but on this one day, this time comes back to me.

The miracle happens, hearts are touched by a newborn baby Savior.

Chapter 15: Easter in the Desert

It was the spring that I was eleven, and we lived on the desert in Kelso California... at least we called it a desert because there was sand everywhere and no mountains or green grass.

Now, the way I was used to celebrating Easter time, was by going on an Easter hike. We'd get some friends together. Our Moms would fix us lunches and we would go out the Saturday before Easter. We liked to climb a hill and when it came noon time, we'd have an Easter egg roll. It was fun to see who could get their egg to roll the farthest, or to keep it going further. By the time we got tired of this game, our eggs would be all cracked up, but we didn't care. We'd peel them off and eat them anyway, along with the rest of our lunch.

I guess I felt kind of lonesome for some of my friends back home in Utah, but I was thinking I could still take a hike with my sisters Sarah and Ruby and we could invite a new friend to go along. But then something nice happened. In our Bible class we held every Sunday morning, the teacher said how would we like it

if the whole class went on a spring picnic. We could each bring our own eggs, but she would bring the lunch. It sounded like fun. We did run into a few problems, though.

First off, when the crowd all got together they started singing songs together. They tried one that I had never heard before. It sounded like swearing, and Ruby got worried. She didn't want to sing about that place where the devil lives.

"Let's just sing, 'Well, Well,'" I said. "It sounds about the same." So we sang, "Well, well, the gang's all here." And we had lots of fun, too.

Some of the boys got a little rough with the games, so our teacher said we could just play on the sand hills for awhile. She told the boys to see if they could climb to the top of the hill. That looked easy. It wasn't very high. So we went too, but we let the boys go first. Then we would slide down the hill. It was fun for awhile... but of course some of us tried it backwards and then doing other tricks as we came down. I'll bet you can guess what happened. No, we didn't get hurt because the sand was soft to fall in, but we forgot to shut our eyes, and it doesn't feel good when you get sand in your eyes. It was a good thing the teacher brought some water so we could use part of it to wash the sand out of our eyes.

We started to have our egg roll races. It was such fun at first. But then some of them tried to make their eggs bump into our eggs and then it wasn't so good. My very prettiest egg got broke in half. I watched the two pieces get all covered with sand. They laughed and thought it was funny, but I didn't. I started to

wish I was back home with my own family and friends. I decided I'd take a little walk.

I didn't go very far, just around the hill, but it was quieter there. I could see one place that looked cooler. It was dug out a little there, almost like a small cave. The sand in it was a little more damp. I started to think how it was that Jesus was buried in a cave-like place, and they had rolled a big rock in front of the opening after he was buried there. Then on Easter morning there were two angels in the cave to tell people Jesus was alive again... that He could never die again. He was resurrected. It felt good to be here alone, to think of that wonderful time, the first Easter...

The older boys came to find me, to tell me our lunch was ready. Everyone seemed to be having so much fun. The teacher told us that those who wanted coffee could have it, but I shook my head. So did Ruby and Sarah. We knew we were the only Mormons, but nobody cared. We still loved the same lord, and read the same Bible every Sunday.

The sun was starting to go down before we got back home. I was tired, and a little lonely for my friends and relatives back in Utah, but suddenly something wonderful happened. I thought I could hear my Grandma Jex's voice in the other room. I ran in as fast as I could and she was there talking to my mother. She had come to surprise us. She said she would stay there few days. Oh it was so good to feel her arms around me to hear her telling me how big I was growing. I felt all happy inside of me... It was a good feeling to get bathed and clean and already for Easter. It didn't feel lonely anymore.

I talked with my dad about Easter. What a special time that was! He just seemed to make it alive for me, and real. I had teachers in Sunday school and primary, and impressed this truth on me, but I think the main thing that made it seem real to me that Jesus really did live was the way my father talked to me about it. I knew that he believed it. He was so sure of it. There was just no flicker of a doubt at all.

It took me quite a while to get this certainty like he had.

When it comes Easter time, we always think of death and life. It's hard to understand these mysteries, but when you have someone that you have such complete trust in, and you know that they believe, it's easier to believe.

Dad's testimony always meant so much to me. It wasn't so much the words he said as it was the way he lived it.

Chapter 16: The Holidays

Our parents let us take dancing lessons. Ruby and I learned a dance to put on at one of their doings. She was in a ruffled pink outfit and I was in blue. I liked pink the best but they said she looked better in pink because her skin was a little darker. She had a better tan.

I still remember how we were taught to move in a graceful way. She was such a tom-boy, never had time for girl things and I was such a book worm, so it was good for both of us.

Books were my magic carpet. They still are. Just by reading a few words, you can travel completely away from yourself and through the writer's eyes see wondrous things, and feel, vicariously what another person is like. When I'd feel pressures getting to me, I'd ride my magic carpet of "make-believe," either through reading or writing. And when I'd get back to reality again, I'd find I can handle it all much easier.

We also learned to do embroidery. I thought it was a big waste of time. I liked the things we made. They were pretty, but

I'd rather be reading or writing. Even back then I made up secret poems and stories. I lived in a pretend world. All the characters I met, I'd want to write about... only it never ever came out good enough and I'd usually tear it up before someone could read what I had written.

I wonder why children are sometimes so afraid of being laughed at. I wanted to read all the books there were. I loved our libraries and spent lots of time there, when we moved back to Spanish fork where I finished fourth grade. I learned so much that year or two about the differences in schools, people and I learned there were lots of people who weren't Mormons or relatives. It was good for me. I learned so much from other people. I learned how easy it is to make friends if you only act friendly and speak first. So many people are shy. They want to communicate, but don't know exactly how sometimes.

Old Time Thanksgiving

A lot of things were different about Thanksgiving when I was a little girl. People really did go in sleighs, pulled by a horse, or a team of horses. Some went in buggies, or in wagons, but we always wrapped up warm, in quilts and blankets besides our coats and mittens and gloves.

Then after I started school, I saw my first car. It was a funny looking car and it made lots of noise. Sometimes it would scare the horses that were on the road. The windows weren't glass, like now. They were something like plastic, and you had to fasten them down on the sides, but still the wind could get inside.

We didn't have a car of our own, but Papa decided it would be nice if we had a ride from our house in Spanish Fork to go over to Provo to see his parents for Thanksgiving. Mamma took along some pies, and maybe some other food. All I remember we had to be careful about holding those pies so nobody would step on them. Papa paid a man to use his car and take us there.

My Grandma Freshwater was so glad to see us. She was not feeling very well and she had to stay in bed. But she was so glad to see us. She wanted us to come close so she could kiss us. She smelled so nice. She always wore perfume. And she had on a pretty night gown with lots of ribbons and lace on it... and her sheets were so white. She had a quilt made with little pieces of velvet sewed together, all kinds and colors. I thought it was the most beautiful quilt in all the world. Grandma liked to sew things by hand. She was always putting pretty embroidery on everything, even quilts.

Mamma told me to take the children outside and try to keep them quiet, all but the baby. She took care of him while she helped my Aunt Mattie set the table.

The Sun was shining, and it was warm outside. We went exploring to see what we could discover. We pretended we were pirates looking for treasure. Ruby and Sarah got tired of that when we couldn't find anything that looked goot to them. So we did "follow the leader," and took turns being leader. We even walked to the corner and back. Then we sat on the steps and I told them the story about the first Thanksgiving, with the ship and the pilgrims and the Indians and everything.

We were so glad to get called in to eat. We were pretty hungry by then. It was a big table with lots of people around it. Mamma let me take a tray of food in to my Grandma. I felt so sorry for her to have to stay in that bed while everybody else had fun. But she just smiled and told me it was easier that way. Her heart would go too fast if she got up and moved around, she said.

We had lots of good food, but that was the first time I ever tasted turkey meat. I thought it tasted a little bit like chicken. Anyhow, I liked the sweet potatoes better, and the pie and ice cream. Mamma said the main thing was you were just thankful to have so much good food, and that is why we call it "Thanksgiving."

About this time, I lost my Grandmother Freshwater. She was such a special person. Some people said I looked a little like her and this pleased us both. She was a nurse or mid-wife and had helped lots of babies get into the world. As she grew older, she had heart trouble and had to spend time in bed. I remember one day my mother was helping her and I wondered outside, trying to find a way to entertain myself. I saw some lovely red June roses and I started to pick them. I was wearing a little white apron and I filled my apron with flowers, and holding the two corners so the roses wouldn't spill out, I carried my treasure inside to show poor Mom. She started to scold me but Grandma said, "Oh, let the child enjoy them. They would just die anyway, and if she can enjoy them for awhile, let her..."

I loved my Grandmother for understanding. I hadn't meant to hurt them. I had just wanted to share the beauty. I took my treasure outside. I felt the velvety softness of the petal. I held

them up to the light, and I breathed their perfume. But most of all I remember the love and compassion in my Grandmother's voice, and to this day I cannot scold a child for picking a flower... I try to share their joy.

The Last Doll

Did you ever have something that was a real treasure to you? Well, I did once. It was a red-headed doll. Never in my wildest dreams had I believed I would ever get a doll like that. I had showed the picture of her, in the catalogue, to my mother. I even wrote to Santa about it, but so many times I didn't get what I hoped for. It was like Mamma said, Santa had so many places to go, and so many children to please. But he always brought me something, and I didn't mind. It always seemed so wonderful just to know he loved me and left me something.

Then on Christmas morning, I found my red-headed doll, with my name on her. I was so happy. I just couldn't believe my eyes. It was such a special Christmas that year. We were in California. My father was working for the railroad. So many nice things had happened. All the children had nice toys, and lots of candy, and nuts and oranges. But I did miss my friends back in Utah. I missed my cousins and my Grandma, too. I wanted them to see my beautiful doll.

The next year we were home in Spanish Fork, in Utah. My father wasn't working. We had a good Christmas. We went to our Grandma's house where she had a big tree. It was fun to see my cousins and for all of us to sing for Grandma. She loved to hear us. Then we all had to hurry home before Santa came. I was

worried because I thought I heard his sleigh-bells going down the street, but Papa told me it was just someone having a sleigh riding party in a big bob-sleigh that horses pull. Where was snow everywhere, even falling on us, and it was kind of cold, but we didn't have far to go.

Santa didn't bring me a doll that year, but I didn't expect him to. My doll was still almost new because I took good care of her. She did get some new clothes, and that was exciting. We had lots of candy and nuts and good oranges.

I think two or three more Christmases went by, and Papa worked some of the time, but it got so nobody could find work. We moved to Provo because he could work in the summertime there at the brick yard. When it got cold, they didn't sell brick, so Papa knew he wouldn't work again until springtime. We had lots of food in our cellar. He could work for apples and potatoes, and for coal to heat our house, at least one room at a time... in the kitchen when Mamma cooked, and after our early supper, we'd let that fire go out and just have a fire in the big front room. It was so cozy, and we always had shiny red apples to eat while we did our lessons. Sometimes we'd even play a game. We were always telling each other the nice things that happened to us that day.

I always got out of school earlier than the others, because I was in Junior High school now. Sometimes my Mamma would talk to me about things we was worried about and that was the way it was one day. She told me my little sister Ruby wanted to have one last doll, just like I did, but she was afraid maybe Santa just wouldn't have enough dolls to go around, and she was kind of big, so maybe he wouldn't give her one, just the littlest kids. I told

her I felt bad about that because I knew how much she always wanted a doll like mine. She could learn to sew doll clothes like I did.

Mamma was quiet for a long time. I think maybe she was about to cry, and I asked her what she was worried about. She just said, "Well, Santa is good about changing a doll's hair, and other things... How would you feel if Santa came and took your doll some night, so he could change her hair, and clothes, and then he could give her to your sister for Christmas?"

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. Mamma wouldn't ask me to give up my doll that I loved so much. I always liked to pretend she was my baby, and I sewed for her. She had many outfits. I always put her away so carefully so the little ones couldn't get her or hurt her. But my sister Ruby didn't even have a doll. She wanted one so much. So, I told Mamma it was all right. I even told her I was getting too big for dolls. Then I hurried to my room to change into everyday clothes...

Ruby seemed so happy that Christmas morning. Her dolly had a new wig, and brand new clothes, and even little crocheted booties. She kept rocking her and singing to her, and pretended she was a real baby. I had a new scarf to wear on my head. And we all had candy and nuts and an orange apiece. We always got an orange on Christmas. It was about the only time. So, it was special to us, and we'd get so excited.

Years went by. Always it was special at Christmastime. But of all the years, I guess I remember that one best. It was the year I knew I loved my sister more than all the dolls or other treasures in

this whole world. I wanted to maker her really happy. Isn't that what Christmas is all about? I think so.

Chapter 17: Watching the Stars

It must have been June-time, because I remember the fragrance of the roses as we hurried around the house to see the first star appear in the western sky. I was visiting My Freshwater grandparents with my own parents. Well anyhow, the grown-up people were visiting while they finish eating. My cousin Clarence Kirkwood happened to be there with his mother, too. So while they finished talking and eating, we went out to see what we could do.

I remember there was a ladder leaning against the house. Clarence climbed up and motioned for me to come, too. It was a thrilling experience, siting up there so high and we had a good view over the veighbor's sheds and bushes. We watched the clouds turn darker gray. All the pink was gone. We knew any minute now it would be dark enough for us to see the very first star. Then we could make a wish on it.

"I've never been this high up before," I said, "I like it." I felt all shivery.

"I come up here all the time," he said, "It's a neat way to look around."

I thought he was brave. He was getting bigger, too. He used to be as little as I was, but now he was taller. I kept wanting to talk to him but I didn't know him very well so I asked him what he liked about school. He said they were starting to study about different planets, and how all the stars were different worlds.

"Do you believe that?" I asked.

"Sure," he said matter-of-factly, and added, "they've proved it."

"Hm. Sure seems strange." I didn't know what else to say. He didn't either. I wanted him to reach over and take his hadn and tell him I liked him and it was okay for him to believe whatever he wanted to. But I was shy. So was he. We listened to the last sleepy calls of the birds, and watched the sky gradually get darker.

"There it is," he said, "The first star. Make a wish."

Together we chanted the words,

Star bright, star light
I wish I may, I wish I might,
Have the wish that I wish tonight.

We were quiet a few minutes, making out our silent wishes, going through some magic manipulations to seal it double-sure. Then he said, "What did you wish?"

"If I tld you, it might now come true," I answered.

He nodded, understanding, and added, "Watch for the next star. You can't make a wish on it, but it is fun to watch them and count them."

"There it is," I said, "and another and another..."

"And soon," he went on, "there gets so may you can't start to count them."

We marveled as we watched them appear. We didn't have to talk now. We could just sit there and feel the soft breeze against our bare skin, all over our faces and arms and in our hair blowing gently, smelling of June roses. And we could hear the rustle of the leaves. It was so quiet here tonight. It almost seemed like we were in a different world far away from everyday things.

The stars were brighter now and he started telling me which ones he thought were which. It didn't matter to me. I just wanted to hear him talk.

Finally he asked, "How do you suppose they got up there?"

"Heavenly Father put them there," I said, "Just like he put us here."

"Do you believe that?"

"Well sure I do," I said, "my Dad told me, and he doesn't lie."

"Hmmm," he said, "I guess so. Somebody had to."

"How do you suppose he went about it?" I wondered, "Do you think he started up there first, or down here first?"

"All they told us in school was their names."

I remember how we were still marveling in silence, looking up at the shiny stars growing brighter against a velvety dark sky, when our mothers came around the house.

"Oh, there you are," my mother said, "We've been looking for you. Get right down."

I hated coming down that ladder. I hated going back to an ordinary life. I looked up once more at the stars. They seemed so far away, but while I talked with Clarence I felt like I could almost touch them. They were that close. It was a magic night. I didn't ever want to forget it. I never did. It was like looking into heaven. Then I had to leave it.

Grandma Freshwater came to visit us one day. She'd written to say she wanted to buy cloth for a dress, so what was our favorite color? Ruby chose lavender. After trying hard to decide between silver and gold, I chose silver. She told us she couldn't find silver but she found the most beautiful white with a sort of silvery look. Mom made up the dresses alike, with white tops and lavender skirts. Grandma said, "But I wanted them each to have their own." …Funny how you remember things like that. To Grandma, each of us was an individual, not something you lump together. I liked that, and decided someday I'd want to treat my grandchildren in the same way, as individuals, each special for his own different personality. I hope they love me as I loved my grandparents.

My cousin Mary also died. She was only about eighteen and we'd had so many fun times together. My Aunt Alice had had about nine children and only raised two girls. The others had died at birth, and now one of her girls was gone. I didn't see how God could be so unfair. I didn't know then that the rain falls on the just and the unjust... that many sorrows come and we can't see why. I remember at the funeral they sang, 'Someday We'll Understand.

Afterwards, we met at the home. There were so many people there that knew and loved Mary. I hope she knew.

While we were in California, our Grandma Jex came to visit us. I had said the blessing on the food in a mechanical, unthinking way, 'Father in Heaven, bless the food, do us good, in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Grandma asked me, "Don't you stop to thank our Heavenly Father for all He has given us?"

I felt awfully dumb. I tried to tell her I do in my secret prayers.

She just smiled and said, "Next time, before you say anything else, say, 'we thank thee for this food...'"

I'm so glad she said those words to me. She was such a great influence for good in my life.

Chapter 18: Good Morning, Morning Glory

We had some poison ivy in a corner of our back yard when I was a girl. We tried very hard to get rid of it. My Dad would dig it up and bury it, but it would just grow again. We dumped dirty water on it, all soapy, and we even put the water on it, all soapy, and we even put the water on it that came from our ice cream freezer when we made home-made ice cream. As you know, this is very salty, and it did make it stop growing so fast, but it still grew.

One day my Dad got an idea. He said, "I need to build a fire to get rid of some junk. I think I will built it right on top of that poison ivy."

Do you think that got rid of it? No. It just got into the smoke, and when my Dad got the smoke on him, he got the poison ivy rash. It was awful. He got little red things all over his arm and neck, wherever the smoke had been. It looked worse than measles, more like chicken-pox. It itched so awful, and it

would spread from one place to another. There were little blisters in the rash. These would break and spread the rash, and then they would get scabs on them.

He went to the doctor but there wasn't much he could do. He told him it was contagious, and to not let others use his towel. We didn't dare. Finally, after a long time it went away, but guess what? It came back the next summer, and the rest for four or fie years. All of us children learned not to go near poison ivy.

I always liked Morning Glories. They grew so easily, and once you got a start, they'd come back every year from dropped seeds.

One day I had been helping my Mom weed her garden. The ground was still wet from the rain the night before. It was soft and easy to walk on, or even to kneel on, and the weeds came out of it with just a gentle tug. Besides, it smelled good, all full of green things growing, and flowers blooming. It was like everything had been washed new and green.

Mom told me to pull up the stray Morning Glories, but I left a few by the post. She thought that was all right. We were just wrapping them around the post when we heard someone coming down the sidewalk.

He spoke in such a cheerful way. His voice seemed full of smiles and happiness, almost as if he had discovered a treasure of some kind. It boomed out:

"Good Morning, Morning Glory," he said.

Mom and I looked at each other, and I had to duck my head to keep from smiling because he was looking right at my Mom, like she might be the Morning Glory.

"Top of the morning to you, my dear little Morning Glory," he went on, "and isn't it a beautiful day?"

"It is that," Mom was saying, and she was smiling at her early caller, who by then had come down the path to where we were working. I could see he was carrying a suitcase of some kind, and I knew he was a door to door salesman.

Mom let him talk a few minutes about the products he was selling, then she said what she always did, "I know they must be really nice, and I wouldn't mind having them, the only trouble is, no money."

Mom always said it in a way they knew it to be true, so they hardly ever argued. But this was a nice man, even if he was middle-aged and kind of shabby looking. He still had the nicest smile and the cheeriest voice. I remember how he kind of touched his hat, like men did for ladies in those days, as if to show respect, and smiling as much as ever he still said, "But it was a pleasure to meet you, all the same, my lovely, Morning Glory."

At the supper time that night as we gathered around the table, each of us telling the interesting things that had happened to us during the day, I had to tell our Dad how the stranger had admired our Mom and called her a Morning Glory.

He looked at her. She was kind of blushing, or maybe it only seemed that way, Mom always had pretty pink cheeks. Dad kind of grunted, half-disgusted. I wished he would say she was his morning glory, too, but he just thought it was foolish.

Mom didn't let that bother her. She told her sisters about it, and had a good time thinking how they could still be thought beautiful even after four or five children, and all the hard life they had been through. Mom said how wonderful it was that a funny little man like that, could still want to make someone else happy.

I thought at the time that he was a pretty smart salesman. Maybe with some, it would work, too. Just get a person feeling happier about life, and just maybe they would buy something.

Since I'm older now, I think like my Mom did, that he didn't have much himself. Maybe it made him feel happier to give someone a compliment. It didn't cost him a thing. It made my Mom feel kind of special all day... maybe even kind of special for the rest of her life. Do you know why I think so?

Because many times, in the years that followed, even after she was an invalid in a bed, she'd call out to any of us, "Well, Good Morning!" and there'd be such a note of happiness and cheer in her voice that we knew she really meant it.

Sometimes, just for me, she'd add the rest of the sentence, "Good morning, Morning Glory," and we'd both smile, remembering.

Sometimes, when you give a gift like that to someone, you just never know how long it will last, or how many lives it will touch.

About this time, a few people were getting radios. What a marvel, to hear voices, real words from people so far away. There was lots of static, and you could hear best with ear phones. Boxing matches, the great Jack Dempsy, ball games, and of course

conference. I went with my father one Sunday to hear General Conference. The people seemed surprised a child would sit so quietly and this annoyed me. Why shouldn't I want to hear the words of our leaders? (I always believed that our children have more good common sense than adults give them credit for.)

Chapter 19: Grandma Jex

When I was in the fifth grade I started feeling less patient with my younger brother and sisters and some of the people around me. They didn't understand me at all. I've found out since then that this is quite natural for a child that age. I wanted to read and write and dream my dreams, and I was always being sent on an errand, or told to take care of a child, just as I was getting settled with my reading or writing. One day my Grandmother Jex said to my mother, "I think Leola needs more time for herself. She needs some quiet times. Why don't you let her come and stay with me part of the time."

Mom thought that was a good idea. I think Grandma Jex was lonely, too, and wanted someone to talk to. I'm glad because it gave me time with her, to hear the stories of life in England, of how she was the only one in her family to join the church and how they disowned her, and wouldn't even write to her. They would act like they didn't even know her. She felt so bad about

that. She always wrote letters to them, even if she didn't get any answers.

Then one day I found a folded up newspaper in the mail someone had sent her from England. She was so happy. She said, "At last, news from home."

I said, "But Grandma, it is only a paper."

Grandma said, "It proves someone was thinking about me. They haven't forgotten me."

With tears rolling down her cheeks she told me about how wonderful it is to at last have news from home. She wrote a poem about it. She knew this was the beginning. She had written to them so faithfully all those years and now finally she did get some kind of an answer back.

She read me some of her other poems. She hadn't had much schooling, but she could write with feeling, and I admired her work.

I was helping her one day and found a piece of brown paper with writing on it and gave it to her. It was something about being away from home and how her folks were across the sea and how she longed to see them. I don't remember the words, but she read them to me, and said she only wished she had gone to school longer, so she could have learned more, because it was hard for her to express herself with the words she knew. She said she had only gone to the third grade, I think. Anyhow, I said, "Well how can you write it so well then?"

She said that she felt the *meaning* inside of her and that when she was lonesome it helped to make her feel better if she wrote about it.

Then another time she had written something about her joy in the gospel, and in coming to Zion. I don't remember much about that now, but have wondered.

One of my clearest memories is of how she would say her prayers, along with the blessing, at breakfast time. She said it was hard for her to get on her knees, but she wanted to thank God for His goodness to her.

Grandma was a little taller than I am, but not very much, and I guess she was about as heavy as I came to be. She loved to eat good food, just like I do. She loved people. She had lots of friends, and she thought her children and her grandchildren were her very best friends. She even liked to write poetry, and do you know what? She only went to school as far as the third grade. Then she had to quit school and go to work, to help her family. She would work in other people's houses, helping the mother with the children, setting the table, making beds, and doing all the things that the mother didn't have time to do.

When Grandma got older, I used to go and help her sometimes and she would tell me these things. She said when she put food in a dish, she had to be sure she had the right dish for the food so it would look pretty. If you put yellow peaches in a yellow bowl, the food wouldn't look very special, but if you put yellow peaches in a blue bowl, or even a white bowl they would look very nice.

One day I was sweeping the floor for her. I had a lot of dirt in the dust pan and was just going to dump it but stopped me.

"Have you looked through that dirt?" she asked.

"There's nothing in it but an old pin." I sad.

"Bring it here," she said. She took te pin. It was a straight pin.

I said, "Grandma, that is just an ordinary straight pin. You can buy a whole lot of them for a nickel."

Grandma just looked at me. She said, "Could you make a pin?"

I said, "No."

She said, "Don't ever throw away something that someone else made that is good. Maybe the day will come when you can't buy pins. Then you'd be glad you saved the one you had."

I never forgot how she valued the workmanship, how she made me look at that pin. Grandma didn't want me to take anything for granted. She wanted me to recognize something good when I saw it.

Grandma Jex had an old fashioned parlor. This was a very special room where children couldn't go unless their parent or some other grown-up was with them. It was a room saved for special visitors, like Bishops, or Home Teachers. The reason children could not go in this room was because there were many things they could break or ruin. I remember a little table with glass balls on the bottom of its legs. It had a pretty cover on it that someone had crocheted. It was all lacy. The table was just big enough to hold two books, a big family album with pictures in it, and a big bible that had pages in it to put the families names, when the children were born, and when someone died. Grandma liked to read it. The Bible was almost always open. I was fascinated because it had an apocrypha in the middle. Grandma

let me look at her books but I had to be very careful. They were old.

I liked to go into the parlor to clean it and dust it.

Grandma had a couch, just a little one, and it had velvet cloth over it. I think it was green velvet, but maybe it was blue. It had wooden arms and legs, all carved. She had many pictures and ornaments around, and the floor felt good because there was a soft carpet to walk on. But the thing I liked best about Grandma's parlor, was the old fashioned pump organ. You had to pump with your feet on some funny steps that went up and down. It was hard for me to pump it and still play the organ, because my legs were still short. I learned to read music in fourth grade and Grandma told me she wanted to hear music on her organ. So I tried.

She loved to hear the hymns and often sang along as I played. I couldn't use both hands, but Grandma didn't mind. We'd sing together songs like, "Lead Kindly Light," and her favorite and mine, "The Spirit of God like a Fire is Burning."

One song was really easy I liked to play. I like to play that one and Grandma loved to hear it. She would sing the words while I played the tune with one hand. It went,
"God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform, He plants his footsteps on the sea, and rides upon the storm."

Then Grandma told me how it was when she was on a boat coming across the ocean, and how scared she would be when it would storm, because everywhere she looked, all she could see was water, and if the storm made the boat go down, they would all drown. But she said they finally arrived safe in America. She told me mother was born after they came to America, and the

night she was born it snowed. Their house had leaks in the roof and snow came all over the bed and almost got her little new baby. Grandma told me so many things about those early days.

Grandma was always talking to me about "When Mr. Right comes along..." She said I should prepare myself to be a good cook and a good mother, and to keep myself just for "him." Everyone should have a grandmother like that. I wish she would have lived long enough to meet Merrill. She would have loved him, as I do, and she would have been glad we had a temple marriage. Maybe she knew. I hope so.

She had a greenhouse, all made of little square pieces of glass fastened together, all over the walls and ceiling and everywhere. People would come to her when they needed flowers for a wedding or funeral, or just if they wanted to make someone happy by giving them flowers. Grandma liked it when the young man came. She would pin a carnation on their coat so they could look nice when they went to see their girlfriends.

Grandma gave a lot of flowers away. I'd always see her pinning a carnation on the coat of a prospective Bridegroom, or sending a rose or two to someone who was ill or had had trouble. She had the first florist shop south of Salt Lake City. I loved the sights and smells in her magic world, the greenhouse... rows and rows of potted plants, steamy air, damp earth smells, soft light, and quiet... and beautiful flowers everywhere. This is how she earned her living after she lost her husband.

One time I brought Grandma the newspaper. I was staying with her all night. Grandma had lost her husband. All her children were grown and she sometimes got lonely. Grandma

showed me a picture in the paper, of a man named Lindberg. They called him the lone eagle, because he was going to try to go across the ocean in a little plane. No one had ever done that before. They didn't have many planes then. They were just learning how to build them. So they called him the Lone Eagle, because his plane was so little, just big enough for one person, and he was going to fly many miles over the water, just like an eagle. I don't think even an eagle could fly that far. His wings would get too tired.

I was at Grandma's house the night Lindbergh flew across the ocean. I still remember her prayer that night. As she asked a blessing on the food, she also talked to the Lord about watching over this brave boy, alone over the great ocean. "Please help the young flier Lindbergh to get across the ocean in his plane," she said, "and help him to return safely."

I can still see the tears rolling down her cheeks. I marveled that she could care so much about someone she didn't even know.

I felt so sure Heavenly Father would watch over that plane, even if he had to reach down from heaven to hold the plane up in case the pilot got sleepy.

That night Grandma made me a little nest on my side of the feather bed. She always made a little round place just for me, so I wouldn't fall off the bed and so I would not roll onto her side. Then she explained to me how big the ocean was and told me it had taken three weeks for them to cross it in a boat, and here was this boy all alone with no one to keep him awake. We talked awhile about how hard it would be to guide a plane when it was dark, with no lights, and all that water under him. If he went to

sleep the plane would fall in the water, and there would be no one to get him out. He had to stay awake many hours and there was no one there to help him, or to wake him if he got sleepy.

"He's such a boy," Grandma said.

Nobody could have been happier than we were when we got the news that Lindy had landed safely. I brought in the paper that showed him getting out of his plane. All the people were crowded around so glad to see him. That night when it was my turn to say the prayer, Grandma said, "Remember dear, to thank Heavenly Father for taking that boy safely across the ocean."

I remembered. I knew Grandma's prayer helped him, and the prayers of many others.

There are so many things I could tell you about Grandma Jex, how she helped sick people to get well. Sometimes she helped the ladies when they were going to have babies, because they didn't have enough doctors back then. They all loved her so much.

Grandma was always a little lonely for her home in England. She said everything was planted so well there, and it was full of green grass and flowers and sidewalks to walk on. But when she came to America, all she saw around her home was sagebrush and weeds and dry dirt and not enough water and not much rain. In England it rained more and made everything look green.

Later on, Grandma's children all put their money together and gave Grandma enough money to go back to England for a visit. She went to see her family. She talked to them and they were sorry they said they disowned her. In fact her sister, and some of

the others decided they wanted to join her church and come to America too, so that made her happy.

When Grandma Jex came back to Utah she said, "This is my home now. I like it better here than there. It is too crowded over there, and besides my children live here, and this is my home. She worked hard with her flowers. Her boys planted her a garden, and she was happy in her American home.

Grandma Jex was a great influence for good in my life. She loved the church. She was loyal to the church. It meant everything to her. She told me that just before I had been born, she had sent a son on a mission to New Zealand... my Uncle Jim.

It seemed like a different world, the quiet place Grandma had... and I loved to hear her stories of earlier days. I really should write some of it down I guess. When I was almost 16 she gave me a ring. She'd wanted me to have it and she didn't think she'd live til my birthday.

She didn't.

Chapter 20: Baby Ellen

My sister Ellen May was born in Spanish Fork July 16, 1925. She was a precious little girl, with a sunny disposition. She learned things so quickly and was soon everyone's darling. I loved her so much I later named one of my own children after her. Both Ellens were so cheerful, so fun to be with, so quick to learn, so friendly. Everyone seemed to love both of them. They were alike in so many ways.

When I was twelve, my father went to work for a Brick Yard in Provo, and we were in a really big house with upstairs besides. Mom said the front room looked like a dance hall and the kitchen was big enough to feed an army. I think she had enjoyed the cosiness of her little home and in comparison this seemed like a big barn that needed an awful lot of cleaning. We girls learned about housekeeping too, then. I thought it was a wonderful home. It was so big and it had an upstairs and a room where my sisters and I could sleep. It also had a large lot where our father could raise a big garden... and plum trees and a pear tree that was high

and beautiful in springtime, so full of white blossoms. I loved to go there to read in the summertime.

I loved the place. It could hold so many people for parties. There was room for all of us when we had company, and it seemed we were always having company. I could write a book just about the people that visited us. I think that is why I learned to like people so much, and felt at ease with them.

Chapter 21: The School Program

Sixty years have gone by since that day, and yet it seems like yesterday. Maybe I remember it so well because it helped me through the years when my own children were small and had school programs. It helped me when I remembered.

Cousin Bert ad I felt so forlorn that day as we sat on the cold cement steps in front of the school house. We were watching other mothers as they came to the school program to watch their children. We knew our mothers couldn't come. They were sisters, and they usually took turns taking care of each other's children, but this year they both had little babies at the same time.

"I'll try to get there," my mother had said that morning, "but I think you'd better take your costume just in case I don't make it."

Cousin Bert had carried an extra brown sack besides his lunch, too. We knew it was too far for our mothers to carry babies, and we didn't own any horse or buggy. We walked

everywhere, except our fathers of course. They went to work on bicycles.

We'd eaten our lunches together. Then we'd carried out sacks to the garbage cans cut back. The can was almost full, so Cousin Bert put the lid on carefully. Then he thoughtfully kicked the side of the can to see if it would give the usual dull sound full cans give. It did.

"I wish she could come," he said as we turned back, walking towards the steps. "I think I finally got my frog-act right."

"Yeah," I agreed as we sat down together. "It must have been hard jumping and croaking like that at the same time."

"That part was easy. It was the keeping in step with the music that was hard."

"I know," I agreed, "It's hard for tulips to bend all at the same time, too, without hanging on to each other. They'll probably think I'm a dumb lemon or something."

"And my dumb green cap will probably fly off again."

"Oh, well," I consoled him, "they won't be there to see it anyhow."

Mr. Jensen was driving the pretty brown racing horse, but it was only pulling a two-wheeled buggy. He called out "Whoa!" and we watched it stop right in front of us. It was interesting watching the spokes of the wheels slow down until you could see every one of them. Mrs. Jensen climbed down the side and her daughter ran to meet her.

Other buggies and horses came and went with other mothers. We listened to them trot briskly along, and watched the puffs of dust gather and settle again in the road. But the most

sound and the most dust came from the model T Ford that Mr. Olsen brought Mrs. Olsen in. It really made a racket, and dust was everywhere. When he stopped to let his wife out, the engine killed and Mr. Olsen had to get out front with a hard crank. It started up louder than ever and he jumped in quick before it died again.

Most mothers walked. Their children would recognize them and run out to meet them. Then the mothers and children would all go inside to wait until it was time for the program to get started.

Finally, everyone had gone inside except the two of us, so I said, "We'd just as well go in, too. They're not coming."

Cousin Bert stood up then and took a step or two out into the sunshine. He shaded his eyes and looked down the street. I walked over by him and looked one more time, too.

"Hey," he said, excitement in his voice, "Isn't that a baby buggy coming?

"Yeah, with two ladies that are short and not too skinny, and kids too."

"It's them," he said, and we ran to meet them. Sure enough, it was a big wicker buggy, with a baby at each end, and on the sides were his little brothers and my little sisters. Our Mothers were smiling, and so were we.

"You did come. You did come," I kept saying and I don't ever remember feeling happier.

We led the way inside, and found them a place to sit. Then we took the little ones down front to sit on the floor where they could see better. What a happy spring-time program we had.

Nobody bumped or turned the wrong way, and Cousin Bert's hat didn't fall off. The children clapped and clapped, and the mothers smiled and smiled.

I guess I remember that day so well because our mothers had a very good excuse for not coming. They came anyway, because they loved us.

We didn't have many *bought* Valentines when I was a girl. We mostly made our own. We would use ribbon and lace and pretty pictures, and of course we'd print a verse on it. Sometimes we would make up our own verses. Of course we'd use lots of hearts. At school we had one big box to drop in our Valentines. We would have a school party in our class. Then the big box got opened—the teacher read the names one by one, and she had two or three helpers to bring us our Valentines. Some children would get big piles of Valentines. Some would get only one or two Valentines. I'm glad they do things better now.

The Surprise

The little girls were whispering about what could be in Miss Jensen's box, the big round one on her desk. But she would not tell them. First we had to have the Pledge of Allegiance and the prayer and morning song. Then she told us.

"This," she said, taking the round lid off and tipping it so we could see it was empty, "is for making a valentine box. Now, if any of you would like to stay a few minutes after school, we will decorate it. Then tomorrow you can put your valentines in it."

Only a few girls stayed to help. It was fun using all those white ruffles and red hearts. She even had cupids to put on top, right by the slit where you drop in your valentines. Oh it was a thing of beauty when we were finished.

I was afraid some of the boys would laugh the next morning, but they didn't. They just wondered how we got all the ruffles and lace and ribbons to stick on it. One of them even said it was pretty neat. It was fun to drop valentines through the top, or to lift the box to see how heavy it was with Valentines.

In those days we made lots of our valentines. We'd find pretty pictures and paste them on a heart. Sometimes we'd use our last year valentines, or the seed catalogues. They had pretty flowers in them. We'd make up our own poems to put inside. Some children just wrote "Roses are red, violets are blue, sugar is sweet and so are you." but some of us like to make up our own words. Of course, we'd always say, "Be my valentine." My Papa told me that meant anything you wanted it to. It could be your sweetheart, or your friend, or just someone you wanted for a friend.

Some of us saved our money and went to the store to buy a Valentine for our very best friend. Margaret asked me if I wanted to go with her to look at these valentines. I asked Mamma and she let me go.

It was fun to feel them in your hands, so slick and shiny and such bright colors. The clerk kept watching us but we told her it was hard for us to decide.

Then we saw a pile of something they called Comic Valentines. I didn't think they were very pretty, just pictures of big

faces, and something wrong, like a big nose, or no hair, or freckles all over. But they didn't cost very much. I guess that was because they were printed on cheap paper. It looked like newspaper. Margarat thought it would be fun to get that kind. I didn't want to.

"I'm going to buy this one anyhow," she said, "and give it to Millie."

It was a valentine with a girl with lots of freckles and it said, "You are as ugly as a mud fence covered with polly wogs."

I didn't feel very good about that valentine. But I guessed Millie wouldn't care. She never talked to anybody anyhow. She was always quiet and sat in the last seat. Nobody ever chose her for their side in games at recess, but she just walked around like she didn't care. And she never did talk to anybody. She didn't wear very good clothes. Sometimes it looked like she had been sleeping in them they were so wrinkled, and sometimes they needed sewing up. But her Mamma didn't care. She just layed around all day and waited for Millie to come home to do up the dishes and floors. Anyway that's the way it was one day when I had gone to play with her after school. She couldn't play anyhow. She had to work. So I didn't go there anymore.

Valentines Day came at last, and it was a good thing because the box was full. We had a party in the afternoon and the box was opened. Miss Jensen read the names while some of the boys delivered out the valentines.

Everyone was getting stacks of valentines on their desks except Millie. She didn't have any, and her face looked red under the freckles, and she bent her head down.

Finally they called Millie's name and my heart sank as I saw the comic valentine. Millie took one look, started crying, and ran from the room.

Miss Jensen picked up the comic picture of a freckled girl and turned to the class.

"How could you do it?" she asked, "It's never funny when it hurts. And how could all of the rest of you forget to give her even one valentine?"

Some of us took valentines to her home. Some of us tried being more friendly. She couldn't help it if she had a sick mother.

And the next year she did get valentines from every one of us. But I always remembered Millie and her face. It wasn't her fault about the freckles. She had the nicest smile.

Chapter 22: Tag-Along Sister

Mom was always asking me to take along my little sister Ruby when I went places. Sometimes I didn't mind. She always looked clean and she acted all right. She didn't bawl around to go home like some little kids. Mostly she' just watch us, and try to do what we were doing.

I'd say to Mom, "I'm bigger than she is."

"You're not," Ruby said.

So we decided to go and get ourselves weighed. I weighed 54 lbs, and she weighed 52. I was in fourth grade. She was in second. That was the last time I was the heaviest until we grew up.

Ruby was always trying to do things to prove she was just as big as I was. She was the first one to climb the tall pear tree. I got scared and ran to tell Mom, and she was in trouble. (Besides, I didn't have to prove I could climb it.) I am so ashamed of myself when I think of the things I dared her to do. It was really my fault that she climbed on top of the old out-house. When she didn't

know how to get down I just stood there yelling, "Jump." That was how she got her sprained ankle, but she never told on me.

We were always thinking up stunts to do. I remember one day when I took her with me to play with some friends. They weren't home, so we talked each other into climbing the old rusty metal fire escape that was put up on the outside of an empty school. It was summer. We figured no one would see us. When we got to the third floor we decided it might be fun to go down that thing on our tummies, head first. She was standing there looking down. I told her it was like a slippery slide in the park and *she* could be the *first* to try it. She could stop on the second landing. Then I'd go first, and catch her on the ground the next time.

There was only one trouble with that. She went so fast she didn't have time to stop until she got to the ground, and I piled in on top of her. We weren't hurt. We laughed and laughed.

We got yelled at, so we ran and hid behind a hedge. Neither one of us wanted to try it again.

"Look at your dress," she said.

I looked down expecting to see a hole or a burned place. It was almost as bad. It was covered with brown rust from the metal fire escape. Boy did we have rusty brown bellies on our nice clean dresses. We had really shined it up. Our dresses were ruined. We had to walk home in front of a lot of people with our dirty bellies. Besides, we had to face our Mom. We both knew we'd get heck when we got home.

I reached in my pocked and my hand felt the little sample bar of soap I'd got from school the last day. I pulled it out and showed it to her.

"Do you think it will wash off?" I asked.

"Don't hurt to try," she said.

The only water we could find was from a drinking fountain. We had to stand on the step to reach it. Then we did the best we could to scrub each other's tummies with the tiny bar of soap. The water was cold. We kept using soap, and then rinsing it off, over and over. Besides it ran down our legs and there was nothing to dry ourselves on. We finally figured the best thing to do was get good and soapy and then find a sprinkler somewhere to take a shower in when no one was looking. We found one. We did get most of the rust off. Then we lay down on the grass to let the sun dry us. We decided it was pretty dumb to slide down shoots on our bellies, but it was kind of fun. We kept using soap, and then rinsing it off, over and over.

We took a really long time to get home that day. We still looked a little rusty, but not as bad as at first. We slipped in the back way and changed our clothes. I stuffed the dirty ones in with the rest of the laundry. The trouble was, I couldn't sleep that night until I got up and told Mom and Dad what happened.

They didn't spank me, but I wished they would have. They just told me I should always remember I had lived here on earth a little longer. I knew what was right and wrong, and I shouldn't have got my little sister in trouble. What if she'd got hurt? I grew up a lot that night.

I still feel ashamed how I'd sometimes pretend to understand. Let me explain. After supper, we'd take turns on the dishes. If I washed, she'd dried and put away, and visa versa. The trouble was, Ruby always had to go to the Cranny after she ate.

I'd clear up, but I either had to wash, night after night, or sit around waiting for her to get back to do her share so I could get done. So, I usually washed them up and got my part done. Aha, I had a reason. Every once in a while we'd have company, and when we had all those extra dishes, guess who squawked?"

"Mom, it's her turn. I did them several times in a row."

Mom would agree, and poor Ruby was stuck. How I wish I'd been more fair. I really loved her a lot. When I got married I missed all that fun we'd had together. That was when we really became friends. I guess for the first time we really appreciated each other. No wonder I loved her children. In a way they were like my own. I'm glad they came here when they lost their Mom. The trouble is you never know how long you can keep a sister, or any special friend.

Chapter 23: The Gift of Music

While living there, we borrowed an organ.[4] I knew the old pump organ had just been loaned to us. Someday the owner would want it back. But in those Depression days it seemed so wonderful to have music in our home that I didn't even want to think of the future. I just wanted to enjoy it.

Each morning as I dusted the curves and edges of the organ I marveled at the beauty of the wood. I liked to let my hand move along the curved part that covered the keys. I liked it best when this part was forlded back, when I could see fingers on the keyboard, and listen to the deep mellow tones. It was then I'd do

4 Of the following story, Leola writes, "Dear family, I wrote this little story for my Dad. I used to call him Papa when I was small. He liked it very much. It is mostly true, of course, and he remembered, just as I did, the big beautiful organ our neighbor let us use while they were remodeling their house. My Dad and I had many happy hours trying out different tunes. Neither of us were too good at it, but every night we'd practice and we had learned a lot. He could play any tune by ear. All he needed was to hear it once. I always marveled at this ability. Everyone knows how well he could whistle. I loved to hear him. Even in old age, his whistle was so cheery, and so clear and so beautiful. He had a deep love for music, and he surely passed that love of music on to me."

my dreaming of the time when I'd be all grown up. It was then I'd see myself sitting there playing.

I'd watch Papa pump the big pedals with his feet to get the music started. He'd keep pumping steadily as he played, and the room would be filled with his music.

"I've just got to learn how," I told Papa.

Papa stopped long enough to nod towards the other end of the bench, "Then sit down here," he said, waiting for me, "and let's get started."

He told me about low C, and high C, had me sound the notes over and over. Then I played them while he did the pumping. It was hard to reach from the low note to the high note with my small hand, but it was fun to let my fingers run up and down the keys. It was like running up and down a hill. Papa always made learning fun.

Papa said it was a good idea to learn to play music by ear, too. That way, he said, you didn't need to worry if someone asked you to play, and you hadn't brought your music along, or if you didn't happen to have the money to buy it. Papa could play really well. He could just listen to a song and then sit down and play it. Even if I just sang a school song once, Papa could play it. It was like magic.

One day I was hurrying home from school, humming a song we had learned, so I could remember it long enough for him to play it on the organ. I was almost home when I noticed the Mover's Truck at our front door. I couldn't believe it would stop at our house. We weren't moving anywhere. But there it was, right against the door.

Then I knew. There could only be one reason. The time was up. It was like I'd been hit in the gut. It was hard to breathe, and all I could do was stand and stare as they carried out the organ. I watched Papa helping them. Then I knew I couldn't stand it yet, going in that big bare room with all the beauty gone.

I cut across the fields, past the pear tree, back to where the wild plums were, into my secret hiding place. I felt the shaking in my body and the hurting in my throat, but it didn't matter. I remember thinking, "It isn't fair. Not when I was just learning. Why couldn't they leave it just a little longer?"

Now I knew I'd never learn. Papa wouldn't ever get enough money to buy us an organ. He was lucky to just get enough work to get food on our table. It wasn't his fault. There just wasn't any work to get.

Papa found me there a little later. He didn't say anything. He just dropped down beside me on the grass. I felt a tear rolling down my cheek. I'd decided to ignore it, but papa took out his big red handkerchief and wiped the tear away. I'd never seen Papa look so sad. His tanned face looked thinner, older somehow. I noticed lines on his forehead, and by his lips that tried not to tremble. His blue eyes didn't have any twinkle today. They were just red-edged and filled with water. A tear slipped down his own cheek but he just brushed it quickly away with the back of his hand, as if he didn't want me to see it.

It was nice to sit with Papa. You didn't have to worry about talking. You could both look at the green leaves dancing there over your head in the gentle breeze. You could look at the patterns of shadows they made all around you. It was nice hearing

the humming of the bees and the chirping of the birds. Both of you, not talking, just sitting there listening.

Then quite suddenly, from further away there came the clear sweet tone of a Meadow Lark's song. I turned to look at Papa, and his face had brightened. His eyes looked almost happy again and I thought he was going to smile. Instead, his lips puckered and formed into a whistling shape. I wondered why Papa would stop to whistle at a time like this. Then I heard the clear tone, the perfect imitation of the bird's call.

I knew what would happen now. The bird answered him. They always did. So Papa whistled again to the bird, and this time the answer was closer – close enough so we could see him. The bird hopped a few steps, tipped his head as if to listen. Then quite suddenly he flipped his wings and took off hight into the blue sky.

"Isn't it amazing," Papa said softly, "that such a small creature could carry in his tiny throat the most magical musical instrument of all?"

"It's all right for a bird," I said, still remembering the lost organ. "Anyhow I couldn't ever be a very good singer, if that's what you're getting at. Teacher told me to sing Alto, cause my voice is too low."

"Is that what you think?" he asked, "She probably just wanted more harmony. Singing in harmony, now that is a gift. Not everybody can do that."

"I know. That's what teacher told me too, and she said if only the best singers were the singers, it'd be a quieter place. How's that supposed to make me feel?"

I could see a puzzled look in Papa's eyes, and I felt like a traitor. I knew I should feel thankful for my voice, and I was, but right now it didn't seem like anything too special, not like being able to play an organ, anyway.

"Well, it's true," Papa said, "there are people that sing better, maybe, than others, and if you don't feel like singing, that's up to you. Ever listen to birds in the forest? So many varieties, but ah, the harmony they make!"

"I know," I shrugged as I said it.

"So, you don't see anything special about being able to sing?"

I shook my head, feeling like a traitor, but that's how I felt. What was so great about singing. Anybody could sing, if they felt like it. And some sang a lot better.

As if reading my thoughts, he asked suddenly, "But tell me, how many people have you heard whistle—I mean really whistle? Can everybody whistle?"

"No, of course not."

"They could if they tried hard enough. The trouble is, most people give up too quick."

Suddenly I felt a warm sunshine feeling creep through me —a feeling of hope. If I could ever whistle like Papa did, so even the birds listened and came to him...

"How?" I asked, almost afraid to hope.

He was smiling again now but his voice turned serious as he spoke, "You have to learn to hold your lips just right. They have muscles in them too, you know, just like anywhere else in your body. Then you shape the sound just right. That comes with

practice. You learn to ease it out, just so, shaping, holding, and letting it go to grab another. You learn to let the air out slowly or quickly. It's like breathing, once you've mastered it. You just feel how to do it. Try."

As he talked, I watched his lips. I felt my own taking shape, puckering. It was a strange feeling. I listened as he demonstrated the sounds.

Cautiously I did try, puckering my lips, and feeling the vibrations across my lips as a buzzing blurred sound fell from my mouth. I felt like crying, I was so disappointed.

"You've got a sound," Papa said joyfully, "Now all you have to do is to practice on it and improve on it, and shaping it into a better sound. You'll be surprised how well you can do."

Papa looked around, at the plum bushes, the grass, of my secret hiding place, and said, "Seems to me you have a pretty good place right here to do your practicing."

The shadows were growing longer as we walked toward the house that day. I remember the sun shining through the tree branches was low in the west. I remember too, the long hours of practice until I too, could whistle the way I wanted to. But most of all I remember the Papa who knew how to comfort a broken-hearted little girl, and how he gave her once again, the gift of music.

My father said it to me one time in a voice so soft[5], so filled with wonder: "Last night I heard the angels sing—have you ever heard what it is like?"

I shook my head, and in my heart I thought, "No, I've never had that privilege, but oh, I'd like to hear it—just once."

"There is such a harmony of sound," he said, "the blend of sounds—and it stretches out." His arms reached out as if he were the leader of a great orchestra or chorus. Then he bowed his head and be quiet, as if listening. A tear rolled down his cheek and he added, "There are no words to explain."

It happened many times, and sometimes he'd hurry to our old beat up piano and one by one he'd play the notes the way he heard them. Then he'd call out excited to me, "Listen! This is how it goes."

Sometimes he'd sing words to me, words of praise to our God, and he'd be so happy, as if for a moment he held the rainbow captive. Then he'd be quiet again and say, "Oh, if only you could hear it, as I did."

I don't remember exactly when it first happened. I do know my father was gone, and I was lonely. After an extra hard night of worries, pain, and troubles, I finally fell asleep, and there it was—a comforting sound. A sound so beautiful I still marvel and feel inadequate as my father did in describing the experience. It was like being on a hillside of stars, each so bright. Then in all that beauty, imagine a sound from each one until the whole universe is

5 This story is found in Leola's notebook dated 10 July, 1983, and is prefaced by this sentence: "Early this morning I was wakened once more by the sound of the angel voices."

filled with a joyful sound. Then, as each star differs in brightness, so does each in sound, and yet it is a harmony to thrill the soul—soft as starlight—beautiful beyond compare. Always it causes such a feeling of joy to grow inside of me I feel I cannot contain it all, and suddenly I wake.

The feeling of happiness lingers, long after I forget the words I hear. Always I want to tell someone. I want to say, "I heard heavenly music. Tell me, did you ever hear the angels sing?"

Now I know why my father had that feeling of wanting to share, to explain. He wanted others to know he'd been singing with that chorus, and some day he'd be there to sing more.

To me, it was like feeling an extra dimension. And how could I describe that? In a way, like when I first learned about cubes compared to flat squares, or knowing the diameter of a tree by the circumference—or how many cups needed to fill a gallon. And yet it was so much more. Those things I knew by intellect. This I knew by feeling, by a certain joy that comes to the soul, and yet more.

My soul cried out in hunger and longing, and it was fed. It had that joy that comes from knowing a truth: the angels do exist; they do sing praises to our Lord; and the whole universe is filled with joy, if we have the ears to listen.

Chapter 24: Halloween

We didn't "trick or treat" when I was a little girl. We mostly had parties at school, or in each other's homes. There were some boys that went out doing bad things, like taking off gates, or borrowing things without permission. One time a wagon was borrowed and somehow put on the top of the schoolhouse. Nobody ever knew who did it, but a few of us had ideas.

The year we moved to Provo when I was in Junior High, I kept hoping someone would invite me to a party. Nobody did. So mamma said I could ask some girl friends over and we could pop corn and play games.

Now Papa had just built us a new outhouse and set it over a nice deep hole. He knew that one of the favorite tricks that Halloweeners did, was to knock over anybody's outhouse that they could. He said that was not going to happen at our house. So right after supper he went out and sat in it, to guard it.

By the time we had supper dishes over, it was good and dark. My two girl friends knocked on the door. They said they

saw our Jack O' Lantern shining from clear across the street. We had put it on the table by he window.

I went outside to see how it looked, and it did look kind of scary with the candle inside of it. It looked like two red eyes were shining at me. And it's mouth had such an awful smile, like a wicked with or something, just grinning at me with one big tooth hanging down. Even the triangle nose was red as fire. I shivered. It was a little bit cold, anyhow.

Then we heard somebody shrieking, and screaming as they ran down the street, and we knew it was just people dressed up in white sheets looking like ghosts, but it still scared us.

My girl friends and I went inside and we told the others about the ghosts running down the street. My little brother wanted to wanted to go out and see, so finally Mamma let him.

When we got out there again we heard a different sound. It sounded like, "Su, Su..."

We thought at first maybe we just imagined it, but then it got all hollow sounding, "Su, Su, Su," and then a long wailing sound, "Come here. Come here."

We ran inside again and my little brother's voice was shaky when he said, "There really is some haunted person out there. Go hear it yourself."

Mamma was disgusted with our little game and she marched out to hear what we were talking about. All of us huddled around her. The voice had sounded like it came from out back, in all those shadows.

Once more it rang out even spookier, and more hollow-sounding, "Sue, Sue. Get me out of here."

"Oh for lands sake," Mamma said. "It's your father. What's got into him to play such tricks."

Mamma started out briskly towards the cries for help. We wondered how she dared in all the darkness, but then suddenly the moon came out from behind the clouds and we could see where the voice was coming from.

Our brand new outhouse was laying on it's side with the door side down, and out of it was coming the desperate voice we now recognized as our father's, "Sue, get me out of here, Sue."

Mama was laughing so hard as she could hardly speak as she said, "Come on, kids, Let's get this thing rolled over."

Well, Mamma didn't ever let papa forget how we rescued him. He just grumped and growled and said he couldn't help it if he fell asleep. What else was there to do in there, and anyhow he'd scared the tar out of a few mischief-makers himself. So, we all went inside our house and we popped corn and played games. But Mamma kept laughing more than anybody.

Chapter 25: Grieving Over Ellen

Mom always made a point about telling people how good I was to help with the little children. She didn't know I loved to gather the little ones around me to practice my story-telling abilities with them. And besides, if I happened to be busy entertaining children I didn't have to help with the meals or clean up. I didn't understand until years later when I had my own children, that it really was a big help to have a child who would entertain children so the grown-ups could visit in peace and quiet. I was entertaining because I enjoyed it, and to this day, when I have children around, I sometimes want to leave the sometimes boring conversation of the older people, and go to talk with the little people. To me, children have always been interesting. I enjoy their company, and their aliveness.

I liked going to school to Junior High in what seemed to me to be a big city. It seemed I had been in so many different schools. I'd had to leave so many friends behind. But always there was the challenge and fun of exploring new places and of finding

new friends. One of my new friends turned against me one day. I had stood by her desk, talking, and had absently laid my book down on the top of her desk and on top of a notebook. When I picked up my book to go, I also picked up her notebook without knowing what I had done. Later, she discovered her loss and came running after me. She accused me of being a thief. I was shocked but couldn't convince her I'd picked it up without thinking. She went home angry and I went home crying. My mother listened as I told the story.

She said, "*You* know you didn't do it."

I agreed I knew it well enough.

She said, "Well, if *you* know it, I'd try not to worry about what *she* thinks."

She told me that there were always those who would accuse us of wrong doing, but if our conscience was clear, we shouldn't worry. I never forgot that.

I remember rocking my little sister to sleep, later, and thinking, "She's to sweet a girl to grow up in this cruel world. I hate to think of anyone ever hurting her."

It wasn't long after that, our little sister Ellen died of infantile paralysis... similar to polio. I'll never forget how sad we all felt. She was just two years old and a couple of months. She could say so many words. She was always so full of sunshine, singing and happy all day long. Everyone noticed her. She was such a special little girl.

It was the first time death had struck our home. We had lost relatives and friends, but always we had the security of our

own family, and now suddenly, *we* lost one too. When we went to school that morning, mother had told us to be a little quiet as the baby hadn't slept well. When we came home for lunch, she told us our baby was gone. I'll never forget how she pulled the four of us close to her, trying to embrace us all at once, as she said, "We've got to love each other more than ever now because there are not as many of us."

I really cried. I loved my baby sister. I felt her death keenly, and for days was haunted by the idea that maybe my thoughts about her being too good for this world was why God had taken her away. I really grieved to think it might have been my fault. You never know how much sunshine a little child brings into your home with his or her funny little sounds and actions, until the house is quiet. There's an awful sense of loss...

I was late for school afternoon just because I'd been thinking and grieving as I walked along. It was a class in literature, and our teacher was an old maid type. She picked up a book and read out loud a poem about how none of us understand the "well-spring of sorrow another person may be carrying inside him." I thought to myself, "How could anyone ever say it better?"

I'll never forget how her words and actions comforted me. Afterwards I told her about my sister. It was good therapy. She told me we all have our unseen crosses to bear. I don't even remember her name, or even for sure what she looked like, but I remember her for her quick compassion and understanding. Teachers can be wonderful.

We all missed our two-year-old angel. But Mom missed her most of all. She didn't sing in the mornings anymore, and we

didn't need to worry about her scolding if we didn't do things just right, like she used to. It was like she was always thinking of something else when we talked to her. We missed our sister, but we missed our Mom even more. Everybody was too quiet, and too sad.

The doctor told my Dad that if Mom had another baby, it might help her. So, I felt happy when I was fourteen and my Mom said she was expecting a baby. The only trouble was, something must have gone wrong, because that little baby never got a real start until she lost it, and our Mom was very ill. She got so ill, that we had to have someone called to help her: her sister Hannah.

I had an eight o'clock class in school, so I'd get up and get myself off to school each day while Mom helped Dad and the other children. One morning she was still in bed.

She said, "Leola, there is some rice there from last night's supper, you can eat that." Then she turned over and went back to sleep. I was worried about her, but Dad was there, so I hurried off to school after I ate.

When I came home at noon, Mom was still asleep. Dad and Aunt Hannah had called the doctor because they could not waken her. The doctor could not get her to wake up either. I remember he even stuck a pin in her, or maybe it was a needle. All I know, he tried it in several places, but she didn't act like she could feel a thing. He checked her breathing and her heart. He said he thought she was all right but to just let her sleep.

Our mother went to sleep on Wednesday. On Friday she was still asleep. We all said our prayers, but I remember Friday

night I could not sleep very well, and every little while I'd wake up and say another prayer for my Mom.

They had tried hot and cold baths, smelling salts and other things for her to smell. We had talked to her, and I had seen my father sitting by her bed with tears in his eyes. I cannot even remember all the things we tried, but Mom just kept sleeping.

I remembered when Grandma Jex had scolded her for doing so much and told her that she had three husky, healthy girls that should be doing most of her work now, and they were stronger than her—that after you have children you are not as strong. And there's nothing wrong about seeing that they do their share.

I overheard it, and didn't believe it. Mother had always done so much. I admired the way she kept everything rolling so smooth, and thought she must certainly be strong to do everything so easily. Now I knew that Grandma had been right. She wasn't as strong as she used to be.

It wasn't easy that day, seeing myself as I really was—scrapping and fighting over who was to do dishes. It didn't seem to matter to me then whether Ruby and Sarah helped or not. After all, they were younger.

I started taking more pride in my work and tried to keep the front room neat, as well as other things mother had asked of me.

Those hours were long for me—wondering if Mom would ever wake up again, or if she would sleep forever and die while she was sleeping. We couldn't get her to swallow anything. I was only 14, and I guess that was when I first started thinking of

prayer seriously – it seemed that all else had failed. I would say my usual evening prayers, but Saturday morning, I got off alone and prayed deeply and sincerely that if possible, Mom would waken, because I hadn't really meant to let her do all the work, and I even told God that if He didn't make her well soon, I would know that it was all my fault for not helping better, and wouldn't He please give me another chance.

I never expect to have a happier moment than when I tiptoed into the bedroom to see how she was doing. Suddenly, Mom opened her eyes and said, "Leola, aren't you ready for school yet?"

I ran to her and put my arms around her and started to cry I was so happy. She said, "Did you eat that rice?" and "Hadn't you better hurry to get to school for that 8 o'clock class?"

I said, "Today is Saturday."

Our mother didn't even know she had been asleep for three days and three nights. She woke up and thought it was just a few minutes.

She said she would rest a little longer, then she ate good, and asked me if I would take the others for a walk so she could take a nap. That worried me, but she said, "Never mind, I will be all right now."

And somehow I knew she would. I honestly felt that God did hear that prayer, as well as Dad's, and that my prayer was definitely answered. I have had hundreds of prayers answered since, in such a way that I know they had been heard. It couldn't all be coincidence. I truly believe that if you try to live right and do the best you know how, that you could ask a favor (if it was for

a good purpose) of God at almost any time of the day or night and you would receive the help you need. All our relatives and friends were so glad to hear the good news about our Mom.

We were all so thankful and felt our prayers had been answered. Our Aunt Hanna (Mom's sister) and her family came to stay with us, to help mom, and also because it was hard times and they had been unemployed. Uncle Wilford could always find work in summer but sometimes, like my own father, he had a tough time through the winter months, so we all learned to "Prepare for winter" by getting food supplies in our cellars, a big pile of coal, about ten tons, and by saving a few dollars for house payments or doctor bills if a new one was expected. Like they used to say, "You have nine months to get the money saved for your baby. It isn't as if you didn't know he was coming."

Chapter 26: Grandpa Was a Pioneer

I helped Aunt Hannah and Uncle Wilford when I was fourteen. I'd been picking strawberries and other fruit when it was in season with Uncle Wilford. It was nice getting up so early, before the sun came up and go to the fields. Of course I did get tired. My back would ache and my knees hurt sometimes, but it seemed good to have a little money, so I could choose my own school clothes and pay for them. It was a good feeling.

Uncle Wilford told me they were expecting a baby soon and if I would stay at his home and take care of the children while he worked, he'd see that I got more money than I was earning in the berries. It was all right with my Mom. I enjoyed the work. He had four of the cutest children I'd ever seen. As I bathed them and fed them and cared for them, I thought how wonderful it would be to have children of my own just like these. That was the greatest desire of my heart, to have a family... only I wanted 12 like my Grandmother Jex.

My Grandmother Freshwater had heart trouble and I remember how when we'd visit her she would sometimes be in bed. She was always so glad to see us.

My Grandfather Freshwater owned a hardware store. Sometimes I'd go in after school and talk with him. One time my mother took Ruby and I to see him and she was telling him we needed new coats for winter. Grandpa opened the cash drawer and handed her some money. She said she'd pay him back. But he said he wanted to do it for them. He said we were nice little girls and he wanted us to have new coats.

I'll never forget how proud I was to have something new, just for me. Mom was so good at sewing. It wasn't until years later that I learned she had taught herself this art. We could always take pride in the things she made for us, but I guess a coat looked like quite a project. Anyhow, Grandpa was proud of "his girls."

When I was a girl, there were still people alive who came to Utah as pioneers. Our teacher told us to talk to one and bring a report.

"I don't know who to talk to," I told Papa.

"Why don't you ask your Grandpa Freshwater?" my father said, "He was a pioneer."

I was just a little bit afraid to talk to him. He was so business-like. I guess that was because he owned a hardware and sporting store. He sold hammers and nails, fishing poles and guns and had big pictures all over of geese flying, and deer in the mountains. He was always giving me brown horehound candy. It was bitter and I didn't like it, but he did.

When I asked Grandpa about being a pioneer, he nodded and said, "Yes, I came across the plains when I was twelve years old."

"Did you come in a covered wagon?"

He shook his head. "We couldn't buy a covered wagon. So we pushed a handcart."

"All the way?" I asked.

He laughed a little and said, "No. First we had to come across an ocean on a boat, then we traveled on a train. There was a war going on, the Civil war, and the fighting was all around us. There were lots of cannons and guns and noise. One time we got so close to the battle our train got hit by a cannon. It made a big bang and shook the whole train. The cannonball made a big hole on both sides, going in and going out, but nobody got hit and the train kept going. We were glad to get away from there! But by then we came to the end of the tracks."

"But Grandpa," I asked, "Didn't they make the railroad tracks clear across, later?"

"Yes, they did," he said, "That was still when I was young. They started to build on the other side and come together in the middle, only they were too far apart and had to do part of it over. They had a big celebration and took pictures of the two trains meeting. I am in the picture."

He got out his picture and showed me where he was.

"Grandpa," I said, "did you see Indians?"

"Yes," he said, "but they didn't hurt us. Our leader Brigham Young told us to always be good to them, and share our food. We did."

He told me sometimes it was hard to feed them when food was scarce, but he always figured it was cheaper to lose your food than your life. "The Indians weren't so dumb," he said. "They knew who were friendly to them."

"What was it like, Grandpa," I asked, "walking across the plains?"

"It was dry," he said, "and hot, and we walked so long we'd get so tired. There was sagebrush everywhere and rocks and dirt. But the nights were cool. It was good to make a fire. We'd burn sagebrush. Sometimes we'd hear coyotes howling. We were tired so we slept good, even on the hard ground. In the morning it was cool and we felt rested. Sometimes we'd hear a bird sing, or see a bird flying. Sometimes we'd find a creek and the water was cool. It was good to put my tired feet in the cool water.

"After we traveled many days we started to see a few log cabins. This really made us feel happy. Now at last we were coming home and we could build our own log cabin."

I often asked him about the olden days.

He was one of the early settlers of Provo. He only had one wife.

Grandpa had some fingers missing, because once in a fourth of July parade, he had seen some one toss a firecracker onto a float and he had grabbed it to throw it away before it exploded and hurt the people on the float or maybe set it afire. Anyhow he couldn't get rid of it fast enough, so he lost some fingers, but he managed quite well without them. He even wrote a daily diary... tapping it out, one or two fingers, on a typewriter. Grandpa Freshwater lived to be 82. He was always commenting

on what a smart little feller he was. He was proud of my Dad and Mom too... and when I did well in school and they mentioned it, it was as if he were "beaming" approval. I surely loved him. I wish I had done more to show him how much he meant to me.

Chapter 27: The Stocking

When I was young, children graduated from the eighth grade. I remember that night clearly, on account of the funny but sad things that happened.

I remember how excited everyone was... how the girls would all go to look at the beautiful cloth in the stores. In those days, most people had to sew their own. It just cost too much to buy one already made. I was almost afraid to ask for something new. Papa hadn't worked all winter, but Mamma said he was working now, and she would come with me to see what it was I wanted.

The cloth was the softest silk, and lavender as lilacs. I loved it. Mom thought it was nice too. She even helped me choose the pattern for a full skirt like I wanted. It turned out so beautiful. I was so proud of it. I guess I was smiling all the time.

Anyhow, the boys started to notice me more. They all wanted to put their names on my dance card. I don't know if they do that now, but back then, they'd line up all the dances and you

knew who you who you were going to dance with before the music ever started. One boy I really liked wanted to write his name on all the lines, but that was against the rules. I remember how fun it was to have someone like me that much.

Provo wasn't very big, then. We only had one Junior High School. It was easy to be friends with almost everyone, and know their names. We had such fun decorating the stage, and the gym, too, for the dance after. We made big paper flowers and we put long streamers of crepe paper all across the ceiling. All of it was so exciting.

The big night finally came. I was so excited when I put my new dress on. It fit just right, and it would whirl so pretty in the skirt when I spun around. One of my Aunts wanted me to wear some light yellow rose buds on the shoulder. They looked almost real. I liked it better without, but Mamma said I should wear them so I did.

My girl friend called early. It wasn't very dark. But we wanted to get there in plenty of time. It was such a nice evening, not cold enough for a sweater, but not hot either. A soft breeze was blowing in the new leaves on the trees and it smelled like lilacs, too. It seemed like magic was in the air.

Everything seemed so perfect at the school. Music tuning up, teachers hurrying around, all dressed up, boys in suits and girls in pretty dresses. We decided to go to look at our hair, again. Girls always have to check to see if it's okay. I was starting to feel uncomfortable where my round garters held up my stockings. One garter had been too loose so I'd put a knot in it, and now it

felt too tight. I took a quick look in the rest room, and moved it a little so it felt better. Then we went upstairs to find our places.

I saw my parents and sisters and brother. Mamma told me they'd wait till it was all over. Then they would go to see Grandpa at his house, while I went to the dance. Papa would come back to get me later.

It seemed like the program would last forever, but finally they started calling out names, and it was my turn to get mine. I took the rolled up piece of paper back to my seat. When I opened it I felt disappointed. It didn't say diploma at all. It just said, "Certificate of Promotion." About then, the Principal explained we wouldn't get diplomas until we got our of high school, but we were still graduating from Junior High, and how great the future would be.

About then was when the awful thing happened. I got up to leave my seat to go to the dance, and my garter broke. I knew what would happen now, my stocking would fall. I whispered to my friend what had happened and she started to giggle. I told her to shut up, and to not tell anyone. She tried to choke it off. She said she thought she had a safety pin, and we'd slip off to the rest room. But even when I pinned that socking over really tight, it still wouldn't stay up. It was too silky. So I told her I'd just go to my Grandpa's, and she could tell people I got sick.

I cried awhile, by myself, on the way, but I did catch up to my parents. They were walking kind of slow. Mamma felt really bad. Papa offered to let me use the elastic arm band he wore to hold up his sleeves... at least one of them. I told them no, I couldn't go back now. I'd just tell grandpa I came to see him

because I wanted him to see my pretty dress. I took off the awful silk stockings and put them in Papa's coat pocket. Mom suggested we go to Grandpa's and maybe repair it there. Then I could go back.

Grandpa was so delighted to see us. So we stayed awhile. His blue eyes were so bright – so smiling. I had so much fun hearing about the olden days I didn't even want to return to the dance. Now, that evening is one of the choicest in my memories. If all had gone well that night... (it wasn't the end of the world like I'd thought)... Good came out of... So often in life we find joy in unexpected happenings, and that bad isn't ALL bad. I learned if you make someone else happy, you won't feel so sad.

Chapter 28: Learning From Experience

Every summer I'd earn school money by working in the fruit. I liked getting up early, being ahead of the sun, riding in the back of a truck, the wind in our face; the coolness, the early morning sights and sounds... a sun coming up over the hill; birds chirping, long shadows, the feel of the cool damp earth as we worked along the rows searching out the red from the green, the taste of berries ripened to perfection... collecting up the cups to fill our crates, the well earned rest at noon time and then the lunch Mom had packed. We'd feel tired, but it was a good feeling. We'd been earning money and it would help out at home.

Sometimes life doesn't seem very fair. Bad things happen to us, and we can't always understand why they happened to us instead of to someone else. Something like that happened to me when I was fifteen.

I had been picking strawberries, and now it was time to do the raspberries. In those days, a truck would pick us up really

early in the morning, long before the sun got up. Boys and girls that wanted to work would meet on the corner, and this truck would come and take you out to Orem where they ha many fields of fruit to be picked. I was glad I could work. I could earn money for my school clothes that way. We would get tired from working all day in the hot sunshine. We stopped for lunch. It always tasted so good. Then after a short rest, we would go back to the fields and work until late afternoon. We'd check in all the berries we had picked and either they would pay us right then, or if we had a steady job, they'd write it down and pay us at the end of the week. One Saturday we had worked hard all day. I was looking forward to resting on Sunday. But we didn't get all done.

"We will need you girls again tomorrow," the man told all of us.

"Why can't the rest wait until Monday?" I asked.

"Because they will fall off, and I will lose them," he said.

"Then why can't we work just a little longer to finish them now?" I asked.

Everyone was tired. Nobody wanted to work, and so we piled into the truck.

I came home really tired out happy because I had money to spend or to save. I gave it to my Mom and asked her to keep it for me. She told me she wanted me to do something for her. A neighbor had some berries that didn't get picked. They were raspberries and she said if they weren't picked, they'd fall off by Monday. She wanted me to go the next day with my neighbor to help her finish off the patch.

I didn't want to go. I was tired from working all week and besides it was Sunday. In our family nobody worked on Sunday. Besides I'd miss out on going to church and I liked Sunday School. So I told my Mom "No." She looked like that made her feel bad. So I said, "I just don't feel right about it." She wanted me to go anyhow.

I asked my father, "What do you think?"

"This is one thing you will have to decide for yourself," he said.

I remember I went to the bedroom to change into better clothes, and I just felt terrible. I wanted to do what my mother wanted me to do. I even wanted to help our neighbor. I knew some things must be done, even if it is a Sunday, like cooking food and doing dishes, and keeping food from spoiling. I came out from the bedroom.

About then we heard a knock at the door. It was the neighbor that wanted me to go again to help her brother. I felt miserable. Nobody seemed to understand that I didn't mind helping out, but I just didn't feel right about it.

Mother turned from the neighbor to me and asked, "Did you decide to help out?"

"I guess so," I said, but I surely didn't feel like it.

It was like any other day. I got up early, went to the corner, and soon a small pickup truck came along. There were only two other girls besides me. We climbed in the back and away we went. We got the picking over with by noon and were glad to be going home earlier than usual.

We had to wait for a ride home. I didn't feel like playing their silly games. I wanted to go home and clean up.

When we climbed into the truck for our ride, we did something very foolish. We got in back of the truck all right, but we noticed the end-gate was hanging down, so we sat on the end of it, and let our feet hang over the edge. My two friends sat on each side of me. I was in the middle. They could hold onto the truck, but I didn't have anything to hang onto. I was sitting in the middle between the other two girls. No one told us it was dangerous, or if they did, I figured I could hold on to my friends. They would be holding onto the sides of the truck. Remember, there weren't as many cars on the road in those days, and people usually drove more slowly.

The country road was bumpy and we kept going up and down. We were glad when we got onto the smooth highway so we could go faster. Our driver was just a teenager, not much older than we were, so the girls started yelling, "Go faster!" and he did.

It was all right until he suddenly turned a corner too fast and I was thrown out of the truck.

I could feel myself falling, but there wasn't anything I could do about it. I landed, face down on that hard road, and felt my head snap back. I tried to get up on my knees, and I could see blood coming from my mouth and nose going onto the road. By then the truck came back. I could tell some of my teeth were gone and it felt like my nose was broken, but I could move around all right, so the rest of me was okay. The other girls were helping me. They were scared to death, so was the driver. He decided to take me home.

When I went into our house I was holding my hands over my mouth, but my Mother could see I was hurt and started to crying. I'll never forget my Mom's face when she saw me. She kept saying over and over, "I shouldn't have made you go. You didn't want to." She felt so bad and kept blaming herself for what happened.

"It's not your fault," I said, "I was the one that decided."

I kept trying to tell her it wasn't her fault. It was just a thing that happened, that's all.

I knew it was because I had been sitting where it was not safe. But I always wondered too, why I felt so strong that I should not go.

I washed off my face. I didn't have any front teeth. My nose was all swelled and we thought it was broken. I was mostly angry with myself because I hadn't been more careful. I didn't want to cause all that trouble and everyone feeling bad – besides my head ached awful. I just wanted to lay down.

Papa looked at my mouth and said the teeth were just broken off. I'd have to go to the dentist to see what could be done. He went to the neighbor to use their phone. Then he came back and asked me if I could sit on the bike so he could give me a ride to the dentist. By then I didn't care what happened. I just went along.

Four teeth were broken off. That meant that the doctor had to get out the roots. I guess he put something on to freeze them. I don't remember the hurting. I just remember feeling bad because now I would have to have false teeth. The dentist worked on the stubs of the broken teeth and got them all out. He said they

could make me a little plate to put in my mouth with four teeth in it, and I didn't need all of them out, but I had to wait until my mouth got healed up first.

Sometimes we all do things that are foolish. The man was sorry about the berries. They could have waited. The driver of the car was sorry he listened to the girls and went too fast. My Mother always felt bad that she made me feel like I had to go. But *I* still did the deciding, and I couldn't really blame anyone else. But the *next* time, I remembered. We can all learn from our mistakes, can't we?

My Uncle Shingleton was a janitor of a school in Spanish Fork. He told me I could come over to his place and work for him the rest of the summer if I wanted to, and that way I could still earn money and not worry about my friends seeing me without any teeth. He had the job of cleaning the whole school, windows, woodwork cupboards, and all that. So I was glad to go over there.

Sometimes I would feel bad when I looked in the mirror to comb my hair, and I hated it because I talked funny too, but I knew they had to get to feeling beter, and then I would look better.

I worked hard, and I earned enough to pay for my teeth. Sure, I know, the man who drove the truck should have helped pay for it too, maybe, but he just got out of town. And our poor neighbor that I had been helping didn't have much money, so I just did what needed doing.

When I got my new teeth – that was the awful day. They looked terrible, I thought. They were so white. They looked like white bones. They felt like a lot of rocks in my mouth. I had a

hard time talking. I really cried when I got by myself. In those days false teeth looked more awful. They didn't look like real teeth at all. I didn't know how I would ever go to school, looking like I did. But I wasn't going to let that stop me. I wanted to learn. I decided I had to learn how to talk with confidence and not be afraid to open my moth because I hated people seeing my teeth. So, I decided I had to take a class on public speaking. I knew it would be hard, but I knew I could do it.

Well, the debating class was all filled up. They did have a class where you could pretend you were on the stage, and act out parts. I decided to try it.

I'll never forget that teacher. It was a Miss Woolsy – the same one that wrote the words for "Springtime in the Rockies." I told her about my problem. She said, "Don't you know everybody had a problem of some kind?"

She told me to notice how some had big noses, or were too fat, or were crippled some way, or couldn't think good (retarded), and that all of us have problems. We just learn to live with them, and do the best we can, in spite of the problem.

Then I found out something strange about our class. I found out everybody was a little bit afraid to get up on that stage and do what they had to do. I found out if I'd be one of the first ones to take my turn, then I could sit back and enjoy hearing the others, and not just sit there worrying the whole time. I got to find out a lot about people. Most of them were so worried about themselves they didn't have time to worry about how I was looking or feeling. So, I didn't have to worry about other people, I just had to worry about me and what I was going to do.

It was a long time after that, that I heard someone else say, "It's not so much *what* happens to you that counts, it is how you *take* it."

Well, I know those words are true. I have seen people with handicaps do marvelous things. The idea is to not worry about what we *can't* do, but to concentrate on what we *can* do. Each of us can do so many things, if we will just try.

No one knows why bad things happen to us. They just do. They happen to everybody at sometime in their life. Just thinking about some of these things that happened to me made me realize *that* is when I learned how much people can love you. It helped me to know how important a good friend is, and then we are twice as glad we have that friend! We even get new friends, and sometimes we get to see different places than we would have seen. We learn about others who had worse luck than we did, and we feel sorry for them. When I was telling one of my friends how sad I felt because my granddaughter Heidi got hurt, she told me about one of her friends that got hurt at the same time. He was in an accident too, but he got his poor head hurt so he can't think good. He has a wife and six children, but he doesn't even know them. Wouldn't that be awful? They just have to take care of him and hope he gets better. Then, of course we all know about people who get in an accident and don't live. That would be awful, too. Even if we know we will see them in Heaven we feel bad.

I guess like I said at first, sometimes bad things happen. But sometimes good things happen, too. I am so glad for all the experiences I have had. I have learned so much because I had

them. I guess that is why we came to this world in the first place, so we could learn from the experiences we had while we were here. And the only things we can take with us when we leave, are the things we have learned while we were here.

Chapter 29: Merrill

Most of the time I was quite happy at home, but I do remember one day when I started wishing for a home of my own. I started looking around at the boys and they started looking at me. I started dating at sixteen but hadn't found anyone too exciting until a special day in June 1931.

One day (the 5th of June, 1931), three of my friends and I finished picking berries before noon. We looked across the fields (on the bench in Orem) and could see Utah lake blue and cool with sunshine sparkling on it. In those days the water was clean and people went there bathe. It looked so cool and inviting.

"Let's go to the lake," Edna said.

"It's about five miles," I told her.

"Who cares? It's a good day."

So as soon as we were delivered home to get our suits we told our mothers we were going for a hike and we started out. It was about four miles or more, but we didn't mind. In those days we were full of life and energy.

We dressed in the willows. There was plenty of cover then. We hid our clothes and took off racing to the water. We saw three fellows farther out. They were spearing fish... Carp. Fish helped out the meals when food was hard to get. People did that then. The water was clean so the fish were good.

I had poor eyesight, and one of my girlfriends said she didn't think the tall one had anything on.

I said, "He's just got a tan colored bathing suit."

His bathing suit *was* tan, and it was almost exactly the same color as his skin. I never knew for a long time after that he actually *didn't* have anything on for a few minutes—but he did get them on before we reached him.

We had lots of fun playing in the water, and I didn't pay much attention to the others, until Edna said, "That tall one is coming over here."

Soon, he stopped to talk a minute to Edna and then he came closer to me, saying, "Watch out or I'll duck you."

Her sister ran all the way up to the shore, and I started to go, but I noticed Edna just stood there waiting, and I thought, "This is silly. What am I running for? I'm not afraid of him." The water was only up to my knees so I wasn't too worried. So I just stood there.

I stood there fascinated as he came towards me. He looked like some sort of "other world" creature to me. Never had I seen such a beautiful specimen, all golden brown, and slim and full of muscles and tall. I thought to myself, "Oh, boy! There's a man if I ever saw one. What a wonderful Dad he'd make for a raft of kids." (He *did,* too!) I was always looking for a man like that.

I was so short myself I'd always been interested in finding someone taller to give my kids a better chance, and he looked quite healthy. Besides I just plain liked him from the first, especially his smile and his gentle ways.

When he asked if we'd like a ride home, I looked at the sky where the sun was about to go down. I thought how my Mom would worry if I was too late getting home. We'd talked to them a little while, and I thought we could probably trust them. But mostly I thought how lucky I was to meet a good looking guy like this and I sure wanted to know him better...

Anyhow, the boys all climbed in the front seat of the car, and left us to dress in peace and privacy in the bushes. Then we all climbed in the back seat. He told us one of the boys was his neighbor and the other was his 13 year old brother, Doyle.

He took all the other riders home first. I was left til last, just he and I. I was kind of scared but he was so quiet like, so well mannered, and I sure did like him.

He said, "How would you like to go out on a date with me?" He asked me if I'd go on a wiener roast with a few friends.

I said to him, "The only trouble is I just really don't know you very well yet—unless we had some others going with us."

He said, "Well, do you know so-and-so?" and he mentioned different people. I didn't know any of the people he named, and he didn't know any that I knew. So he said, "Well, we could just take the girls you were with today and go up there."

I thought that would probably be safe enough, so I suggested he could ask my two friends and get dates for them. He

said he'd be glad to, so he took along his brother and a friend, the same ones who had been out at the lake with him.

"I've just got to wait until Sunday School's over," I told him, "I always go to Sunday School."

He said he would.

So we went just as soon as that was over, and we really enjoyed ourselves. We had such a good time. Merrill kept trying to impress us with funny acts, like jumping a bush and then the river. The only trouble was he didn't make it past the muddy shore on the other side. His new two-tone shoes which were the latest fashion then, were covered with mud, and stained for life. He cleaned off the mud the best he could.

We took pictures. We hiked and talked and the day was gone too quickly. We watched the moon come up and I finally said I had to go home. We found a stray kitten. I sure liked that little kitty, and I wanted to take the kitty home. I did, and I guess he got a little jealous, because in my concern over the kitten, I forgot to tell him I wanted to see him again. Anyhow, I felt a little jealous because he sat in the middle in the back seat going home, and he put his arms around the other girl too, as well as around me and I didn't like being "shared." We've laughed at it since.

We still had good talk, and when he took me home, I told him I'd sure like to see those pictures again. But when I went to go in, I never told him that I'd like to see him again, and to come back again.

So take a hint from me, if you really do like someone, don't forget to say you'd like to see them again. I had to wait three weeks, and I kept wondering what had gone wrong. He'd seemed

to like me. Every other fellow I'd been with (and there were only three or four I'd dated) had been right back to see me the next day. Sometimes it got a little bit monotonous, because it seems like you'd just meet a guy, and then he wouldn't leave you alone, so why didn't *he* come? He only lived a little ways from us.

He said (later) he probably wouldn't have even bothered to come back if I hadn't told him I'd like to see the pictures when they were finished[6].

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6 Speaking of this, Merrill said, "I was pretty cautious with her, because she acted like she liked me alright, but not asking me to come back or anything, why, I thought maybe I'd made a fool of myself that day. I'd done some silly things to entertain them, like trying to jump across a creek there, and I said I could do it.

"I had a pair of these combination Oxfords on—nice looking shoes, brown and white. I jumped across, and landed on the other side just on the edge of the mud! Got a laugh out of that.

"We took pictures, and we did different things. We hiked around and we came upon a big water pipe-line that was going through the country. We were getting over that, and she got up on the top after I'd gone over and on the ground, and she stood up there, looking how to get down. I put my arms up there to catch her, you know, I thought she could jump down and I'd help her. Well, she jumped right to the side of me, ha ha! Well, she didn't want me to get a hold of her that much!

"Little things like that, you know, and the cat that she talked about. There were a few farmers up in that area here and there, and I guess that's how the kittens got out in the country. She found this kitten and she paid so much attention to the kitten, and I just figured, well, I've just made a poor impression, trying to entertain, and not knowing just how to do it, so I thought probably she wasn't very interested in getting together again, so I didn't even try to call on her.

"I think she came by my place, is how we got to see each other again. She asked me about the pictures, and I told her, 'Yes, I had them developed,' showed them to her.

"So that's how we got to see each other again."

From a cassette recording of Merrill and Leola Curtis, discussing their early years together

Chapter 30: Engagement

By July 24th (in less than two months), we pledged our love and in August he gave me a ring. He didn't even ask me to marry him. He just slipped it on my finger while we were sitting in the dark in the car while I was about ready to go in the house. Of course, I was sure happy, because I'd sure been so hoping for that.

He was so different from any other man I'd ever met. I loved to talk with him.

So I started school, where I could show off my ring to all my friends, and feel pretty proud, because I had me a sweetheart. But it was a lot deeper than that. A lot of my teachers and other friends said, "Oh, you're too young to get married. You don't even know what it's all about," and all this stuff. My mother was kind of upset, and said, "Well, it's not really an engagement ring —it's just a ring."

I said, "Well, it's *my* ring."

At first she wanted me to give it back to him, and of course, there was no way I was going to do that. It really meant a lot to

me. It was really love, nothing like what either of us had ever experienced before. You just aren't light minded about something like that.

Then I started worrying.

We had many serious talks. I told him I wanted a temple marriage and he said he'd do all he could to make that possible. I'd always wanted a large family and I know a man would need work to take care of them. He'd have to be a hard worker. Lot's of other things worried me. I told him I wanted twelve children.

He said, "You'll change your mind after the first one." But then he said we could figure that out as we went along, and he'd be willing to consider my side of it. His main objection was that it might be hard on me. He'd lost a sister in child-birth. He knew it was no easy thing, this having children.

I asked him if he'd ever had a patriarchal blessing. He hadn't, and I hadn't, so we went together. We did this right after my seventeenth birthday... Oct 25, 1931. All of my questions were answered and I knew he was a good man and I felt humble to be asked to be his wife.

After that, I knew for sure this was the man of my choice if he would have me. Suddenly life took on new meaning. Never had I been so happy. He was all I had ever wanted or desired in a man. He loved little children and was so gentle with them. He was good to his family, his sisters and brother. He honored and respected his parents. He took me to meet his folks, and they welcomed me, and I could tell they were good people and I could feel proud to join their family.

I was deeply impressed by the love I saw in his father's home, the love and respect they all showed for each other. I remember thinking how I'd love to have a family exactly like this one, all enjoying each other's company so much, and hardly a cross word between them. I could tell there was deep love between the parents and I thought this was wonderful too, as so many couples seem to take each other for granted after a few years. Some of them don't even act like they like each other anymore. Seeing his parents still in love, gave me the hope that their son might also want that kind of marriage. His father was so kind to his children. They all loved him so much. Their mother was so cheerful, in spite of hardships, she was thankful for her blessings. Her family and home were her entire world. She was a loving person. I learned to love her as dearly as my own mother. They were both Mom to me.

I went through school all winter, and he was trying hard to get a steady job. He worked some for the gas company, then he worked other places—odds and ends jobs, but there just wasn't any work to get.

I remember this one time he even offered to pick apples for a dollar a day. It just shows how hard it was. By the time November came, we just couldn't see our way clear to get married or set a date. That was just out of the question, because one thing we were both determined about was that when we got married, we were going into our own house. There were a lot of couples in those days, and I guess there still are, who have to live with their folks for awhile, because they get down on their luck and we were

determined that we were going to have a house of our own, and we weren't going to get into that fix if we could help it.

In October or November, he had a chance to go up to Salt Lake to work, and it wasn't very good wages, but it was steady. Uncle Ed came down and said there was an opening where he worked. So he was going to have him come up there and work, and we were just tickled to death, because now at last, it looked like he might have work. There was at least a possibility that we could get married the next year.

The depression years were on. When he did get work in Salt Lake City we were glad, even if we couldn't see each other as often. The times he did come down were even more precious. He was my hero. He still is.

Chapter 31: Gladys

Mom still wanted a baby. When I was almost seventeen, she told me the good news again. She was expecting a baby. Now there would be five again, and we didn't care if it were a boy or a girl. We just wanted something little to cuddle and love.

It was so wonderful to hear Mom singing again, to see her so smiling and happy, to see how she joked with people and laughed again, and teased our Dad. It was so wonderful to have our Mom back. Every day, in my secret prayers, I'd ask the Lord to take care of the little one growing inside of her.

At last the happy day came, just before Thanksgiving. Mom asked me to go to a neighbor lady to tell her she was needed. I remember they had a little radio, and I wanted to stay awhile to hear it. I still remember how it was full of static, but I could hear music, too, and it was coming from miles away. Now I wanted to stay and listen awhile. They said I could. But I knew my Mom might need me, or at least the children would soon need supper and I had to get it ready, so I left.

All night long we waited, and finally just before it got light we heard a baby cry. The neighbor lady let me hold her. Oh, she was beautiful, and I loved her so much. We all did. My little brother Irvin said, "She makes us all so glad." One of the girls said, "Yes, glad, us..." Our Dad said he thought that would be a good name. So did our Mom. I still remember how she said, "Oh yes, we are so thankful, and so Glad!!!"

So they named her Gladys. How we loved her.

Such a sweet baby, rolly polly, round pink cheeks, fuzzy dark hair on her tiny head, and just 16 inches tall and weighed 7 or 7 ½ pounds, I don't quite remember which. It was like having another little Ellen May, the same sweet baby face, with blue eyes and blond hair, always happy, always our baby. She came just before Thanksgiving, so for the first time I had the fun of getting a holiday dinner ready.

I'll never forget that Thanksgiving dinner. Maybe because it wasn't cooked with Mother's help and didn't turn out quite perfect, but there was never a family gathered in a more humble spirit of thanks for our blessings, and just happy because we had each other.

I insisted on taking care of the family when she had her baby, but oh I certainly wished you could have waited until after thanksgiving. Imagine getting all that food done at once and for a whole family. After that first "don't know how I'll do it" feeling it wasn't so bad. But I'll never forget how wonderful I felt when I took Mother's tray to her and she said it looked beautiful, and we had so much to be thankful for this day. We both looked down on

Gladys and were so happy because she was a healthy beautiful baby, and Mother was getting along as well as she could.

I felt proud and Happy to be able to help her. Dad come home for lunch because I forgot to bake bread and I served him potato soup like we made in school—only I forgot to season it. Did he holler.

"What are you feeding me the potato water for? Isn't this for yeast?"

Mother called to him. I did have rice too, so the day was saved. But I shed quiet tears over my soup. Mother told me to put a little canned milk and salt and pepper in it. That did improve it. What a job it was getting the kids up for breakfast and off to school. And what a relief to have mother up again. Believe me I had new respect for her and all she did, and I still consider that experience one of the most valuable and important ones of my life, It seems a person can't understand all there is to do to run a house, until they take over completely.

Aunt Hannah came in for a day or two and helped some, and Mom was in the bedroom with the new baby so I could ask her for suggestions and help. And even if we had lost one little sister—God had been good to us, and we had another. And Mother was feeling better, and anyone could see that she was happy, and the rest of us, too. There was a spirit of contentment and love in our home that day.

Chapter 32: Christmas 1931

I was lonely for my sweetheart that winter, so I studied twice as hard, and got my name on the honor roll, even if I had stayed home to help Mom with the new baby until she was strong enough to do her own work. I had a whole lot of dreams about all the writing I was going to do. I also had the honor and good feeling that comes with achievement. My friends looked up to me, and everywhere I went it seemed someone was calling out a "Hello" to me.

There were around three hundred pupils in our school then, I think, and I knew almost every one by name and they knew me. I took journalism the last half semester and worked on the school paper. That was pure joy. I was fascinated seeing how a paper was put together, and I did some of the articles. I especially liked to write humor, and was often complimented.

The Christmas of 1931 was a special one for me. Even the tree in the corner seemed to stand taller, and it's ornaments seemed less shabby, it's tinsel less used. Everything seemed a little

brighter, a little newer. My mother had a new baby, and now she didn't cry over the two-year-old she had lost.

I was happy too, because I had a sweetheart, and I was wearing his ring on my finger, and planned to be married by next Christmas. It was happy and sad at the same time. The sadness came with the thought of leaving this family I loved so well. My fiance had found work in another city.

I only wished my father could find work. This year was better than last year. At least we had enough food in the cellar to last through the winter, and my father had found a place to work for the coal he needed. Last year he'd gone to the railroad tracks with the gunny sack to pick up pieces of coal that fell from the railroad cars. Many times at daybreak I'd see him carrying the sack towards the coal shed.

This year there would be coal enough to keep our new baby warm. Mom kept the coal range going. She cooked beans and soup on top, bread in the oven. It always smelled so good in our house, like now with popcorn popping.

Carefully we'd string the popcorn to make strings of it for our Christmas tree. Dad cut a new star out of cardboard. We marveled how he could make all five points come out even. Carefully he covered it with silver foil, and hung it on the highest limb. As he talked, he told us once more the story of the three wise men, and how they brought their gifts to the Christ child because they loved him so much.

Always, his stories filled us with the same great love.

I remember looking around as we sat at supper that evening. I thought our Mom must look a little like the Virgin

Mary, with her dark hair, and with that special love shining in her eyes, like all new mothers have.

Ten-year-old Irvin was up to his usual tricks, teasing sister Sarah with a pretend mouse, so she forgot her whisperings with Ruby. Both Ruby and Sarah were in Junior High, but our Dad still had to tell them either tell everyone their secret, or else keep quiet until they were alone.

The baby started crying from the other room, and I got up to get her. I loved to hold baby Gladys in my arms. I'd tuck the pink blanket around her, and she felt so warm. I'd pretend she was mine. Now as I looked down to her dark hair, and little round face, I wondered if Baby Jesus had looked a little bit like this.

After supper was cleared away, and everyone else was in bed, I had time to settle down with my school work. It was hard to think about lessons. I kept thinking about my Dad. He'd been looking so worried, lately. He'd been out of work for so long. Lots of men were out of work. He'd worked for fruit and potatoes, and anything else the farmers could give him. He had even worked for coal in the coal yard. So we wouldn't be cold if we just burned the fire. We had food in the cellar but there was no money for Christmas presents.

I wished I could help out in some way. I couldn't even get baby-tending money. If people didn't have money to go out, they didn't need baby-tenders.

Mom said I helped plenty just by staying out of high school while she was in bed with the new baby. I didn't mind. Somebody had to cook the meals and do what needed doing. I'd missed my

friends, but they stopped by to leave off my assignments, so I wouldn't get too far behind. Tomorrow I'd get to go back.

Then I noticed my friend had brought the school paper along with the lessons. I glanced through it. There was a final notice about a Christmas story contest. Tomorrow was the deadline. I remembered a story I'd worked on the year before. I knew more this year than then, and I decided if I worked it over, I just might get the second or third prize. Even three dollars and two dollars looked good then.

The next day, I typed it over during the noon hour, put it in an envelope and it was handed in. I tried to not hope too much.

In the Assembly we had just before Christmas, they called out the names of the winners of the second and third places. I hadn't won either. I tried not to care, but my heart was in my shoes. Then suddenly my name was read out loud. I couldn't believe my ears.

"Will you please come up on the stage," I heard the words, like I was in a dream. "You have won the five dollar gold piece."

Somehow my legs carried me, and I was there holding the gold piece in my hand. The audience clapped and cheered. The school paper was handed to me, and I could see my story on the front page. Somehow it looked different in print. Like it had been written by someone else. Maybe it was the picture that went with it. But my name was on it. It just didn't seem real to me.

Friends gathered around me. Some of the girls hugged me. The teachers were proud of me. I just couldn't believe this was happening to me.

At home it was even more wonderful. Mom seemed so surprised and pleased. Dad's blue eyes had that special look of pride, like when he would say, "I knew you could do it." Even my brother and sisters seemed impressed. But the nicest thing of all, I had this feeling I could help out just a little.

When I had a chance to see Mom alone, I told her I wanted her to have the money, "for Christmas, you know."

Mom just smiled and said, "But our Christmas is the new baby. Besides, I told Santa to bring one gift for each child. They won't expect any more than that."

I knew if my Mom wouldn't take my money, then for sure my Dad wouldn't do it. So, I decided to go to town myself, and see what I could find.

As I walked past the store windows, I saw an artist busy working. She was painting scenery pictures and selling them for one dollar each. Mom had always wanted an oil painting. I went inside and told her I wanted one. I watched her paint first the red sunset, then the dark pine trees, and then a little cabin with a light in the window. I knew Mom would like this. So would our Dad.

When I handed her the gold piece the artist asked, "Are you sure you want to spend this? Gold pieces are kind of special, you know."

I nodded. I couldn't say anything, but she probably knew it was all I had.

I found a nice tie for my sweetheart, some beads for the girls, a ball for Irvin and a rattle for baby. I had six dimes left when I started home.

It was fun to hide the presents, but I waited to show the picture to the other children, telling them it was for our parents from all of us.

Ruby said, "They'll know you paid for it."

The children came to me with the usual question, "What can we give our parents?"

Ruby and Sarah were teenagers, Irvin was ten, and all four of us dumped our nickels and dimes in a pile. There wasn't much, but we'd try.

The stores were so full of beautiful things. My heart was heavy when I told them, "No, we don't have enough for warm gloves, or other clothes."

Our mother and dad deserve nice warm clothes or new clothes or something else really special. They worked so hard. They were so good to us, and they never got anything new. It was hard to enjoy the Christmas music, to see people smiling and happy, to hear the bells, to see colored lights and decorations everywhere. I just wanted to go home.

Then Ruby went on a little wistfully, "We were saving our pennies for some green glass dishes. We had enough to buy two, for Mom and Dad, but they said we had to take all six for a set."

I gave them four of my dimes. Both girls were so happy. They hurried away.

The girls found what they wanted, a pretty green glass bowl with six small bowls. Wouldn't mom love that? And dad would say how good the peaches tasted in a little glass dish like that. I smiled at their enthusiasm. Irvine shrugged. He figured it was as good as anything our money could buy.

So, we took the dishes home, wrapped each one carefully and hid it in our secret hiding place. It was good to see the little girls so happy.

Irvin looked kind of sad. He said, "I was sure wishing I could do something special, at least for Mom and Dad. But I don't have any money at all."

All I had left was the two dimes. That wouldn't buy much. I durned them over in my hand, and suddenly I had an idea and I told him what I was thinking.

"There's this place that takes pictures, four for ten cents. Why don't you and I go down there right now?"

He thought it was kind of dumb. He said, "They know what I look like."

"Maybe so," I said, "but do you know anyone else who could give them that kind of present?"

"I guess you're right," he said. I still remember his sudden grin. The photographer captured just a little of it.

Both of us were disappointed in the pictures. They were so small. No bigger than a postage stamp, or not much.

"Never mind," I told him, "I'll make some frames out of colored paper, and that will help."

It did. A little.

It was truly a special gift. It was the last picture we ever had of him. No one ever knows when a Christmas will be extra special, until later.

Christmas eve was so special that year, the snow outside, the warm fire inside, the stockings all in a row, with one tiny white one on the end. We ate shiny red apples, and sang songs.

Someone knocked at our door then. It was my sweetheart. I was so glad to see him. I thought my heart would burst with happiness. He said he wanted me to come to see his folks, too. I looked around at the circle of family I had loved so dearly. I wanted to hold that scene, like a picture, forever in my heart. I didn't know then that my little brother would soon leave that circle.

Mom always treasured that last picture of her little boy, and the girl who married and moved away. I treasured in my heart the picture of all of us together.

Then I walked with my sweetheart out the door.

I treasure this memory, and the joy we shared that special year of 1931.

Chapter 33: A New Dress for Mamma

It was during the Depression years while I was still in High school that Mother's Day was coming and I couldn't seem to find any work, not even baby tending. Just that morning I had seen my mother with a patch on the front of her dress. She'd covered it quickly with an apron, but not before I saw the patch, and Mom felt bad. She didn't ever want us children to know she was going without clothes just so she could buy us shoes, and the things we had to have.

I discussed the problem with my younger sister Ruby, saying, "Mom needs a s. I wish we could find a way to earn some money to buy one."

Ruby nodded her head. "Our Mom is just as pretty as those other ladies and they get to wear pretty colors and our Mom wears an old skirt and shirt."

"Wouldn't she look pretty in pink?" I was dreaming out loud, "Pink like her cheeks. Mom has such pretty pink cheeks."

Ruby said, "I'd rather have blue. Our Mom has the prettiest blue eyes in the world. Blue like her eyes."

Impulsively I said, "Let's go ask Papa. Maybe he could help us think up a way to get her a new dress."

Papa was in the back room where he kept his Healtho Products. He was sorting through his orders, and filling them in little piles here and there, vanilla or lemon extract, fruit punch, salve, and a whole lot of pie filling packages...

Papa hadn't had work for such a long time he'd decided to try to be a salesman. The suitcase he carried was heavy, and he didn't get too many orders, but he sold a few, and it helped.

When we told him about the dress for Mamma he looked so sad. I knew he wanted to just give us the money, but he didn't have any. Then all at once his eyes started smiling, and then his voice sounded happier and he said, "There is a way. See those piles of pie filling?"

We nodded and he went on to explain, "Well, with every package the lady bought she could pick out a free tray, and I did good on those. I guess I sold 20. But when I went to deliver them, the ladies changed their minds. They were sorry, but pie filling was something they could do without. Now I have to send that back. It will cost a lot of postage. So, I'll tell you what I'll do. If you can take those orders out, and get the money for them, I'll give you half of it, and I think that would be enough for a very fine dress. That way, I could pay my debt and not have to send them back. Maybe they will pay you better than they did me."

I wanted to buy a blue one to match mom's blue eyes. Ruby wanted a pink one to match moms pretty pink cheeks. We couldn't decide, so we gave the money to mom and told her to choose her own color. She bought a black dress, because it would be nice to wear to funerals. I understand better now, than I did then.

Ruby's first boyfriend was a really friendly kind of person, but he always wore a hat. Most men did, then, but they take them off in the house. This guy kept his hat on. One day Ruby playfully took it off for him, and guess what? No hair.

He said, "Now, you see why I wear a hat? I lost it with a fever."

He didn't ever come back. We always wondered what happened to him. He was a nice sort of guy.

Chapter 34: Fortune Teller

They were always around the edges of town, the gypsy fortune tellers.[7] They'd set up their tents and their big signs with hands printed on them, and many words too hard for me to understand.

I played with the gypsy children. I loved thir dark eyes, and their carefree happy-go-lucky ways, but I could never understand the mystery they believed in. "I don't believe all that looking-into-the-future stuff," I said one day to my friend. "How can they look at your hand and know your future?"

"You'd better believe it," she said, " Did you ever see two palms just alike?"

When I shook my head, she went on, "Tomorrow you come and see my mother."

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7 The following story is from Leola's Minute Memories, and it covers two different time periods – first, when she was a little girl, probably living in California, and the second is while Leola is engaged to Merrill. I put it all here in one place because it's all about Leola's experiences with fortune tellers, and placed here, it's something like a flash-back.

I made my little sister Ruby go with me. I felt kind of scared.

The gypsy looked at both of our hands and said quite suddenly to me, "You will live longer than your sister. See your life-line is longer... and you will have more children." She was counting little lines on the side of our hands.

"Now that is enough," she said. "If you want to know more, you must cross my hand with silver."

"I have no money."

"Be gone." The words were like a slap and we were gone, fast.

They wouldn't let the gypsies stop in Provo, so when I moved there, I found they seemed to use other methods, like tea leaves and cards, but everyone wanted to know when things would get better.

In August of 1932 my future mother in law was telling me about a lady down the street, a Mrs. Conklin, who gave out good fortunes. She asked me if I'd like to go with her to make a neighborly call on the lady.

We found her sitting under the shade of a tree, playing with a deck of cards... She looked up, glad to see us and asked us to sit down beside her on an old couch.

As we sat there she shuffled through the deck, not letting us see them. She was mumbling some sort of words almost under her breath. She looked up again and I thought she looked strangely different, almost as if she could see beyond us towards something we could not see. Even her voice had an eerie, monotonous sound.

She spoke first to my future mother-in-law, "You will be separated from your husband in about two years. You will live alone for a year and then you will marry a dark haired man."

"No chance," the woman answered. "I may disagree with my husband at times, but we would never get a divorce."

The fortune teller shook her head and kept muttering and suddenly turned to me, "You think you will be married on the 15th of August. Isn't that what you said?"

I agreed, but she was shaking her head.

"Not so. Not so."

"But I am getting married. We went down to get the marriage license and we go to the temple Monday. We have it all planned."

She continued to shake her head. "Not on Monday. Oh you will get married, but there will be an unavoidable delay... and a long wait."

"Oh, thanks a lot," I said. "Well I don't want to hear any more."

"I'm sorry I couldn't do better," she said, "Maybe if I could think on it."

We both laughed on our way home. It was a big joke, especially the 'divorce' part. I never knew anyone who seemed more in love than my husband's parents.

When I got back to my own home, my Mom told me we'd have to wait until Wednesday, or the 17th for the wedding as we could not get it done on Monday in the temple. Suddenly I felt a little worried wondering if there would be other delays. There weren't. We were married August 17, 1932. But of all the 33

couples that were married that day, we had to wait the longest. We were the last couple to get married.

Now you wonder about the other prediction? It was true. Two years later, my mother in law was separated from her husband by death. None of us had thought of that kind of separation, and she was grateful for the fortune-teller's kindness in not telling her. Yes, she did remarry one year later, a dark haired man.

But somehow, I still feel like I did then. I'd rather wait and let life happen. It is more interesting, and less worrisome, that way.

Chapter 35: Delays

Merrill would give me a dollar or two at a time, and by the time August came, we decided that we just didn't want to wait any longer. We'd already known each other for over a year, and it seemed like a lot longer than that because he'd been away all winter. When he did come, it was always hard to let him go again, and although it was only forty miles away, it may as well have been 4,000 miles, because there was just not getting in between or calling on the phone. He did write letters. That was one time I got letters.

I remember this one time he wrote one, he wrote, "Dear little woman,"

My mother got a hold of that letter. She said, "You're no woman! Your just a young girl!"

I said, "Well *he* thinks I'm a woman!"

I think he'd written it in Spanish or something, I don't remember, but I found out that's what it meant, and I told my mother. She sure didn't like it, she didn't want me to get married.

She said I didn't have sense enough to really think, but said, "Well, anyway, he's four years older than you are. Maybe he'll have enough sense for both of you." That's the way she took it.

But my dad understood. "If they really want to get married," he said, "I'll sign your marriage license." Because I wasn't quite eighteen, and had six more weeks before I'd be eighteen.

My mother said, "She can wait that long."

I knew my mother's psychology, because by the time another birthday came around, I would have to decide whether I was going to school or not. And she knew me well enough to know that when school started, I'd be there. And if I started school, I wouldn't be going to get married until the spring. But I only had to take two classes in order to graduate. All I needed was two credits. And I thought probably he'd let me do that after we were married, and I could go to school and finish that much. But in those days, girls didn't go to school after they were married, and it was quite a thing for a girl to stay home and take care of the house and have the babies. That's the way it was. And it was kind of a disgrace then if a man couldn't provide for his wife. That was the way they took it. If a girl went out to work, the man figured that was a slam on him because he wasn't making enough to keep her.

Anyhow, I didn't get to finish. But ever after, I read everything in sight, and some of my children told me I got as much as high school, and I know I even helped my college kids. I guess I got an education anyhow.

I had to decide just what was most important. I knew he was the man I wanted, and I sure didn't want to lose him. Of course I probably wouldn't have lost him—he'd have just come back to Provo, but then there was no work in Provo, and then it'd be the same thing, of waiting, and waiting, and wishing he could get work.

I really liked school. I liked my "honey" better. By the next summer, I knew I just couldn't live without him another year. I felt old enough. I'd spent most of my life learning how to run a house and family. My interest was there. Of course I wanted to be a teacher, a writer, a missionary, a traveler. But of all the things I wanted most, it was a home and a large family with a man to love and help me. I'd found him. My Mom thought I was too young. She wanted me to wait until I was eighteen. She probably knew I'd want to finish that last year of high school if I started it.

Besides, I loved him, and wanted to be with him, so it just seemed like the logical thing to do, and I've never regretted it. I've always been glad. I kind of hoped that my own children would wait a little longer than that to get married, because I did miss out on a few things by not going out to work and a lot of the things that young folks do. Girls get together and go to a show, or go off on a trip or something. Well, I missed out on all that. But I figured it like this: I was lucky I found the man I wanted a little sooner than most girls, so I wasn't about to let him escape!

It was a serious decision, it wasn't something we entered into lightly. I had told him the only way I wanted to get married was to go to the temple. He agreed, and said he'd see his bishop about it, and he did. And though he didn't even hold the

priesthood when I first met him, he soon became an Elder, and we went to church every Sunday—went to our sacrament meetings together long before we were married. We had a good background.

Of all the people I ever knew, I think I loved to sit and talk with him more than anybody. That was one reason I fell in love with him—he was somebody I could talk really serious with, and yet another time he could be playful and have a lot of fun. Well, how do you explain love? That's just the way it was, and that's the way it was fifty years later.

But, both Merrill and I didn't want another winter apart with him working in Salt Lake City. My father told me he understood how I felt and he'd sign consent for me to marry. I knew I could continue to educate myself, but I might never find another man like this, if I didn't accept him while I had the chance. It doesn't sound right in words, but I'm just trying to say I didn't rush into something without really thinking it over. Even at so young an age, I'd learned to sort out my "priorities" and put first things first. I've never been sorry. We had a wonderful life together.

Chapter 36: The Wedding

Merrill got his recommend from Bishop Mac Adams... mine was from Bishop Eves.

We were married Aug 17, 1932, in the Salt Lake Temple.

The night before, my folks didn't have any way to get there, and they wanted to witness the ceremony. So Merrill had to come down the night before the wedding, pick up my parents, and take them to the little apartment he had rented for us. Mother and I slept on the bed, while Merrill and his future dad-in-law slept on the floor. The next morning, (about 5:00 in the morning, it wasn't even light) Merrill had to get up and go up to LDS Hospital and get a load of ashes, and take them out to the hog ranch and dump them, then come back, get cleaned up, pick us up, and we all went up to the temple for the ceremony.

Some people like to pick out who they want to do the sealing, but I said, "Oh, we'll just take whoever's available," because I figured anybody who was eligible in the temple were good men, and to me getting married and having it made right,

that was the main thing. Well, who do you think we got? Joseph F. Smith, who later became president of the church. He was the one that married us. He gave us a nice talk before and after, and oh! It was just a real special day.

I don't think I'll ever forget how it was when Merrill took me for his wife. There was tears in both of our eyes. I felt like that was the happiest day of my life, and I still remember that feeling. I still felt that way when we were old. My mom said, "Well, you think you love each other now, just wait until you've been married as long as your dad and I have been married." I know now what she meant by that. It isn't that you love them more, it's just that you depend on them more, and they're more a part of you. You just can't live without each other.

It was so beautiful. We both shed tears we were so happy. Later, in our new home when he called me "Mrs. Curtis," I knew I was the happiest woman alive. I always felt our marriage was a very special one. I still do.

There were about 33 couples married that morning, and Merrill and I were the very last couple. It was really wonderful. We both had tears in our eyes. So did Mom and Dad. I loved them so and did not want to leave their home, but I did love my husband, too, and it was right for us to start our life in our own home. Mom had brought a lunch with home grown tomatoes and homemade bread... we ate it after Merrill carried me into the house and called me his little Mrs. Curtis. After awhile we went shopping for groceries. It cost a whole $5.00. I said to my father, "It sure takes a lot to get started." He laughed and said, "Yes, and after awhile you'll find it takes a lot to keep going, too."

We took my parents home. Tears kept rolling down my mother's cheek. I couldn't understand why until I had to give my own children to their companions. Of course you want them to be happy, but from then on you know it will never ever be quite the same between you. Their greater love should be for their companion... It's the price you pay for taking your sweetheart from his parents.

My mother said, "You think you love each other now, but wait until you've been married a few years."

Well, love is something hard to explain. When it had been proved by trials and troubles, it deepens and you become part of each other. But I still remember the joy of *that* day.

Merrill couldn't find work of any kind. He even offered to pick apples for a dollar a day, and couldn't get it. So finally he did get a job at a hog ranch[8], the humblest type, or poorest: feed pigs and clean up after them for a big $15 a week. Sure it bough more then. We rented a tiny apartment for $10 leaving $5 for food—next week another $10 for furniture, next week $12.50 for car payment, and the fourth week we could get cause up on our light bill, a pair of shoes, or whatever else was needed most desperately. And we might even manage enough money to go to a show, or even have gas enough to go to Provo. For this he worked from about five in the morning until seven at night and he only got every third Sunday of.

8 Merrill started work at the hog ranch shortly before they were married, and even had to work a short time on his wedding day, but this job lasted five years, and carried them through the first part of their marriage.

No wonder we were so happy together.[9] What little time we had was so precious, and being away from our folks we really did live for each other. We were eating. We had clothing to keep us warm, and a shelter over our heads.

I did worry about one thing. I wanted a big family very much. I didn't see how we could take care of them. But one thing about babies, they usually come one at a time, with plenty of time to prepare for just one more.

How can I tell you of our lives together. It would take books, not pages. We were so happy to have each other. For the first time in my life I had all the time I wanted for reading and writing, but I didn't think I had much to write about. Years later I had so much to write about but not enough time to get it done.

9 About that period, during their first year of Marriage, Merrill said, "It just seemed like a whole new world. I was so thrilled, because I loved her so much. I'd just sit there in a chair in the evening when I'd come home, when we were having supper, and I'd look in her face, and I'd just marvel. I thought, 'That's the prettiest little thing, and there's no getting a round it"—that's the way I felt.

"I knew she was a wonderful little gal. It was just a great thrill to me. Finally I had her and she was mine, and I was hers. I had to work long hours, but when I'd come home in the evening, it would be a miracle all over, because there she was. We could enjoy the evening so—we'd just sit there and look at each other, talk, comment, and love each other."

Chapter 37: Scrimping and Saving

At first I had an awful lot of leisure time. I've looked back on that first year and thought, "Oh boy, wouldn't I like to have some of that time now!"

I did lots of reading. You know, that was one of the things, down at the dump, people would send out their magazines, and some of them, even drugstores and places they sold them, would just rip off the front cover and send it back to the company to show that they didn't sell that one, and they didn't have to pay for it, and they'd just send them the new book. Well, there was a *lot* of them, and Merrill would bring them home[10] and after I'd read one batch he'd take it back, and he'd get another one. Of course, they were usually clean and decent, but I really got a lot of reading done then.

10 At the hog ranch, where Merrill worked, the city would bring their garbage to the hog ranch before delivering to the dump so Merrill could take what he wanted to feed the hogs. Merrill was also allowed to take other items, such as the magazines Leola speaks of here. Merrill was also sent to some companies to request their day-old foods for the same purpose, and he was also able to take home some items from those trips.

Another bonus: every month when they'd dump the garbage, they'd dump in their silverware, dishes, and bottles, and things like that. Well, if Merrill found a good fruit jar, and it didn't have any chips or anything, he'd save it. And also quite a few bowls and things from the restaurants. Plates, and bowls and things. We'd scald these up, in fact I even boiled them before we used them. But we had enough dishes for us and all our families.[11]

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11 Of this time, Merrill said, "Those days, why, these bakeries had day-old bread, and it was always labeled, and there was rolls, and different kinds of pastries. They'd sell it to the hog ranch for just so much a truck-load. I'd go up and get a truck-load of this bread, and it wasn't a pickup—it was a medium sized panel truck, clear full of bread in the wrappers. They had a lot of good stuff that was good enough you could buy it out of the market. But stuff was so cheap those days that they just wouldn't bother with the day-old stuff. They wouldn't try to keep it.

"We got a lot of good out of that stuff, take the choice stuff out, and the rest would go to the hogs for feed. I'd take some of it home, and we had a neighbor there—they were Italians, and my wife gave them cookies one day. They thought that was pretty great, and this happened two or three times, until they caught on to this. We lived on West temple near 21st south, and they'd see me stop in and leave some of that stuff, and they got so the woman would send some of the little girls over and say, "My Mama would like to get some of those cookies and stuff you got today."

"We got quite a kick out of that. We used to take some to our folks, too, when we'd go to see them. There was one day, I'd gotten stuff from the Purity biscuit company and the National Biscuit company. They had different stuff, and one time they had a whole big barrel of chocolates, and they looked good. They had coconut in them. And you know, it kind of gets a stale taste—you'd eat them, and they'd taste good, then right after you eat them, it would give you kind of a soapy taste. Some people couldn't eat them, but you know, we ate a lot of those things. You had to keep eating them so you wouldn't get the back-draft! But they were still good to eat if you could eat them. And we ate a lot of them. We also got cookies from the purity biscuit.

"Things like that came in handy when a person had such little to go on, even though things were cheap! You didn't have a lot of money to buy anything with. But you know, as we went along, we had enough to eat, so there was no problem. We never were hungry—we ate good. We'd bought enough furniture to furnish this little three room apartment, and we bought just enough new stuff, and we paid $10 a month

And sterling silver, oh, boy! He told me I could have those to keep. He'd bring them home, and even buy them from the other drivers—carry a bunch of dimes with him, and whenever one of them found a sterling silver one, why, he'd hand them over a dime, and they'd give him a dime. He'd bring it to me, and I'd always get a quarter out of it, and sometimes fifty cents! We made about thirty cents on every sterling silver spoon we got.

Well, of course, if I could have looked forward and seen what silver would be worth later, I would have had quite a fortune if I'd have kept in and saved it.

I remember this one place where I was taking them in to sell them, the man got a little bit suspicious. He said, "Where are you getting all this silverware?"

I'd go in maybe once a month with some. I had to tell him the truth, and he said, "Well, sounds like a wild story, but none of the pieces match."

I never thought until after I got home, "I wonder if he thinks I'm thugging it somewhere!"

Our First Thanksgiving

We got married in August, and we'd been down to Provo a couple of times. One thing that bothered me, I had never been

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on that, but you know, we managed so well on what little we had that we paid that ten months ahead, and it was paid off ten months earlier than we had to have. We did that, plus we had to put $12 on the car I had that wasn't paid for, plus the rent and the lights, and to live on. The next week we'd get to go to Provo and back, after a whole month. So I guess we were really trained through hardships to learn to handle what we had, and we made out just great. Through the years, things got better."

away from my family before, and I had a little sister that was not quite a year old, and oh! I really loved that little thing. I missed her more than all the rest of them put together! And it was kind of hard being in the city, when I'd been used to being in school where I knew everybody in the high school, because our high school had only maybe 200 students. I knew them all, and all of them knew me, and I just couldn't walk down the street anywhere without someone yelling, "Hi!"

Then suddenly I didn't know anybody, and besides, the city seemed awfully cold and unfriendly. Provo at that time only had about 14,000 people, because that was before they had the steel plant in, and it was a friendly town, and people just seemed to know everybody. When it's a little town, and then suddenly go to a city where people could care less about you. So sometimes I'd get kind of lonesome, and it's sure good that I liked to read, because that helped to pass the time. And I'd be so happy when he'd come home at night.

But I was really looking forward to when Thanksgiving was come, and I could go home and be with my folks again. Well, you know what? He couldn't get off for Thanksgiving. The pigs had to be fed and it just wasn't his turn to get off. They had to take turns, and they worked seven days a week. On the day that one would get off (about every third or fourth week) he'd have to hire someone to take his place. So it just happened that he couldn't leave.

I felt so bad about it, and I didn't want to show him, but I did—and we didn't have much money to make the dinner with, either. I remember I went down to the store. He gave me a dollar

or two, and I looked at the meat and chickens. Everything cost too much. Finally I got a few link sausages. I thought they were kind of neat. I got those, and made dressing and cooked them together, and they were kind of good and of course a lot of taters, and a pie or two. It was a good dinner. But after the dinner we were just resting, and he could tell I was feeling kind of lonely, and he said, "Well, I'd take you to a show if we had any money."

I said, "Well, maybe we've got a few pennies left."

You know, I insisted that we save a little bit of our money, and it was costing everything we had just to keep going. But we would save our pennies. Well, we got our our jar with our pennies, and we had 30 pennies! That was just enough for two show tickets. We went to one of the cheaper shows, because you could get in for fifteen cents.

We decided we'd go. We lived on about 7th south and 3rd or 4th east, right close to Liberty Park. So we walked to town and saw a show—I think it was called "The Great White Chief," or something. All I know is it was cowboys and indians chasing each other around the hill all night! We had *so much* fun! We didn't even have a nickel over to buy the popcorn, but the lady when we laid down the thirty pennies for the show tickets, she just kind of smiled. Gosh, everyone understood about poverty in those days.

We just had a ball seeing that show. I don't think I ever had a better time! We came out, and walked home, of course, and all the way we were just laughing and having such fun. It was really a special night anyhow. I think about htat time so many times when we can't all be together, and I think, well, it's good because that

way you learn to love each other. And we sure love each other—it's one of our choicest memories.

We did get to go home for Christmas. I guess it was one of the first times we'd stayed overnight, I can't remember, but evidently we'd just gone down for the day, having a Sunday off, going down for the day and back again that night, but this night mother made the bed in the front room for us. And my younger brother (he was eleven) said, "You're not going to *sleep* with him, are you?!"

I can remember that like it was yesterday! Mother said, "Well, they ought to be sleeping together! They've been married for three or four months now!"

I guess he just hadn't thought we were actually sleeping together. Shows the difference between the times then and the times now!

That year Irvine got a sled for his birthday, and he was *so* happy, because he'd always wanted a sled, and now he had a bran new one. There wasn't any of us that knew the tragedy that would happen with that sled.

In February, we received sad news. Another precious member of our family was called to that land we cannot see, but to which all of us must go some day. My only brother, Irvin, almost twelve, was killed in an accident. He had been riding his sleigh and got out in the street, and the car couldn't stop in time. They had made a hill on a vacant lot, and there weren't very many cars in those days, so they had one fellow watching to see if any cars were coming.

When there was no car coming they'd get on this hill and scoot out, and sometimes it would go out in the street. If a car was coming, the fellow who was watching was supposed to signal and then they'd stop before they got out in the street—dig their feet in the snow or something.

Well, something went wrong, and my little brother got run over. It was a pretty bad time, because my mother only had one boy, and I only had one brother, and we lost him.

This was the February after we were married. Merrill and I went to Provo and bought the shoes for him to wear, and I remember the feeling. My brother and I had always been real close, even though he was younger. He was so quick, and he'd catch onto things so easily. It was just fun to talk to him, and he was quite a little rascal to pull tricks and keep things jumping and moving!

The whole world feels lonely and empty when someone you love isn't there any more. I know the things you say, too, like, "Be glad she didn't suffer too much," and "try to remember all the good things you *did* have—how lucky you were," and, "Of course we'll always have regrets for what might have been."

Time heals, but days go so slowly. Maybe we cannot always control the quantity, or how long we will be privileged to live, but we can do a lot about the quality of what we do have.

There is always a little sadness when we remember precious yesterdays, but maybe if we could see him now, we would know that he is happy there, and has privileges and opportunities for advancement there—that he could not have had here. And when we love someone so dearly, we want them to be

happy, and it is good in a way to know that they are safe from the trials and temptations they might have faced here.

I sincerely believe that our Father in Heaven does call them home for a good reason, and if we knew why, it would be easier to tell them goodbye.

Mom tried to be brave. How hard it must be to lose an 11 year old child. Yes, he died just before he was twelve Feb 17, 1933.

It was hard to lose him, but these are the tragedies that come along. We were glad at least that Merrill had a little brother, and that was the only boy on both sides. He was a little bit older, of course, but he was still a young fellow. He came up and visited us once in a while. I know Heavenly Father found a good place for his spirit to go.

Once he rode the freight and stayed over night. His hair got so long, and he hated it, and he said he didn't have any money for a barber. Merrill said, "Well, I can cut your hair!"

So he started to cut. First it would be a little bit too short on one side, so he'd shorten up the other side. Then he'd have to shorten the other one. He went back and forth like this till I think the kid had about an inch of hair on him!

He still told Merrill it looked better than it did before, but he never let him cut it again! No way!

Merrill said he still would have made a good job of his hair had it lasted!

Chapter 38: Nolan

One night we visited Merrill's Aunt Leeleth and her husband, Bill Gibson. We were playing cards and I wanted to bake a cake because it was Lealeth's birthday[12]. But I didn't have any powdered sugar, so I thought, *well, I'll make her some divinity frosting to put on it*, only I didn't have any syrup, either, so I thought, *I wonder how honey would work instead of syrup...*

So I made it with just the same recipe, only I used honey instead of syrup. Well, that honey didn't set! All it would do is

12 Of this visit, Merrill said, "We used to get together and play cards. My Aunt Leeleth was such a marvelous woman, so much fun! She couldn't have any children—but she loved children, but both of them were just so much fun. Bill, he was quite a storyteller—it was just so natural to him. He'd stretch the truth, but he'd admit it. Leeleth would say it's a lot of BS, but say there was a lot of truth in it, too.

"There were times when we wanted to do something, and we'd play cards and one night we were playing cards until quite late, and it was her birthday, and I I said, "If I'd known it was your birthday, I'd have put on a kettle of beans. And we went on playing cards, and I thought, *well, why can't I do it now?* So I went in the kitchen and put on a kettle of beans.

"We played cards into the wee hours of the morning till the beans were done. We had beans for her birthday!"

chew! So once we cut the cake, you'd take a bite and chew and chew and chew and try to get rid of the candy! It was more like candy all over the top of it, but she said it was one of the best birthdays she ever had.

It just happened that Leeleth and Bill had asked us to come over to a dinner one day, and oh, she made a lovely dinner—nice apple pie for desert. I remember how good it was. That was the day that nothing stayed down, and suddenly I knew maybe we were going to have a baby. That was a pretty scary thing, you know. I was happy in a way, but here I'd had a whole year just to be me, and just to be us. Now I knew there's going to be someone else.

One of the happiest days of my life was when I went to the doctor and he told me I was indeed "with child."[13] I was a little afraid. So was Merrill. He had lost his sister Verda in Childbirth. But she hadn't been as healthy and strong as I was. She'd had Bright's disease. I tried not to worry, but I wasn't very big then, and even the doctor said that it might have to be taken with instruments. And in those days, it was more unusual than it is now. It wasn't as safe.

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13 There's a fun little snippet from this time period in a letter from Susan Jex Freshwater (Leola's mom) to Leola in a letter dated May 15 without a year in which she wrote, "Remember when I insisted you should take a walk, and it was such a pretty night? Gladys was then about like Debby [Gladys would have been about 3 yrs old]. Remember Merrill carried her part of the way, and she said, 'I want the moon!'

"Well Merrill lifted her as high as he could. 'I'll give you the moon.'

"Oh, how we did laugh, and how happy we all were then and when the little baby did arrive, [Nolan] and have been just as happy when the rest of the grandchildren came."

We were kind of worried, but at the same time, we were so happy. It just seemed like I wouldn't have anything to be lonesome about or bored, because I'd have a baby to play with and talk with. Those were some of the happiest days of my life, expecting Nolan.

My mother said, "Well, if it's a girl it's all yours, but if it's a boy, it's going to be half mine." Because my mom had lost her own boy.

So I really wanted a boy—oh! I wanted a boy so much! And Merrill wanted a girl. He liked his boys, but he was always a little bit partial to little girls. He thought they were so cute! All the way, we figured it's going to be a girl or a boy—one or the other. One of the other of us would have to be pleased.

I figured Merrill would probably get what he wanted, so I bought all the clothes in pink and white. Of course, in those days, it was a lot different. You dressed all little babies in dresses, and you couldn't put them in white dresses until they were like six months, and you didn't know if it was a girl or a boy without asking. Then when they were six months, you'd put them in colors, and boys would go in rompers then, and the girls would go in colored dresses.

Anyhow, the blankets and everything—I got pink, because I knew I was going to have a little girl for sure. And then the night the baby came, it was a boy.

It was a wonderful day when the little guy arrived. I'd wanted a boy so much... ever since I'd lost my brother the year before.

Nolan William Curtis was born May 15, 1934.

I was so thrilled. I was worried Merrill might get a little disappointed. He had tears in his eyes and just said, "Oh, I'm so glad you got what you wanted."

And he was, too. Afterwards, he said he'd really wanted a boy, too. Then when he went to work, of course he was all puffed up and telling everybody he had a boy. He was pretty proud.

From then on, he was our pride and joy. I really enjoyed that little feller. Oh, he was just the joy of our lives! We had so many good times with him. Merrill used to try to teach him to be strong and do things like show his muscles and everything.

We wondered how we had ever got along without a child. He was so much company for me. I loved to teach him. He was so quick about learning things.

Mom had a special love for her first grandson. How dearly she loved Nolan.

Chapter 39: Moving

After we had been married a year and six months or so, we moved into a house with Ed and Mark. They'd been living in an apartment, and we'd been living in an apartment, and neither of us were very satisfied, so we decided to rent a house, and each of us live in half of it, and share the kitchen.

The kitchen was the only thing we had to share, because we each had our own front room, we each had our own bedroom, and I think we had our own bathroom—I don't remember. But it was a big kitchen, about like the kitchen I had in the end. There was no problem, we each had our own cupboards and our own table and so forth. They worked night shift and Merrill worked day shift. It worked real nice that way. And us girls were company for each other. We lived that way quite a while. Toke and Arta had already come up—that's Merrill's sister. They stayed with us for a little while.

Then one day we found out we were both expecting a baby, and Arta was also expecting a baby, so we thought, "Oh,

boy! This won't do!" Three women, you know, all having their baby. It's all fine until you get your baby, but then what do you do? So Ed and Mark moved out first. They found a place to live in. Then Arta went back to Provo, because she wanted to be home with her baby when it was warm. And Merrill and I moved into a little house on Jefferson street.

It was our third place. This was just a place about a block over from the field there where they play baseball and everything. It's where Sears has got their warehouse now. And do you know what? It just shows you, if you could only see ahead! We could have bought that little house, and the ground it was on for $600 dollars at that time, and he would have let us have payments that we could manage. But I had this crazy idea that someday we were going to move back to Provo. I just never felt like Salt Lake was my home. It took a long time for it to really feel like it was my home. And Merrill never wanted to go back. Anyway his work was here.

Years later, when all the children got to go to the school here and everything, I wondered why I ever wanted to go back to Provo, because Salt Lake was my town then, too.

We didn't buy this little place, and we could have sold it to Sears and really made a bundle, but you can't see ahead, so we didn't know. And we were a little bit dissatisfied, because it was just a tiny place.

And we wanted a place out farther where we could have some chickens, and cow and pig, and have a little living. So we moved out to a place right after Nolan was born. It was right

across from Lincoln school. 3794 south, 5th east, and that's a house a little bit like the house we eventually stayed in.

It had some pine trees in front there, and we were quite happy there for a while. It was really a nice place. There was only one bad thing about it. We'd got us a cow, and Merrill got a pig and some chickens, and we were really going good there—except it was costing us too much money. There was no way we could save a penny to buy. And now, with a little boy, we were determined to have a house of our own.

It was depression time, and we couldn't seem to save any money no matter how hard we tried. I wanted a home so we could have our family. I had seen other people raise a family in the rented home but I wanted one of my own before we had any more children. We tried so hard to save money, but first I needed my tonsils out, then my appendix, and of course maternity costs.

Well, we had a lot of good experiences in that house. That's when Nolan was a baby, and he grew up to about two years old while we lived there, and Merrill raised some really beautiful gardens there. We had milk, and it was really wonderful to have so much, but I got a little bit discontented thinking that was a big house to take care of, and anyhow, I wanted a house of my own, and it just seemed like there was no way we could save enough money for a down payment for a house. In those days you had to have a third of the payment down. So we talked it over a little bit, and decided that probably one of the ways we could do it would be to get a trailer house and move into it.

People were just starting to move into trailers those days. They weren't anything like trailers now days—they were more like

a camper, really. We looked at some and they were all too high of course. But we did find one we could get for $200. Of course $200 then was a lot more valuable than now. And this guy made them himself.

So we went to look at it, and it was just six feet wide and twelve feet long. Now if you can measure all that distance, you'll see how little that is. It's smaller really than the camper we had later, after you put a bed in. But the way the bed was made—it was just like springs, these flat springs and wire coils. It was put on a hinge on each end of the spring so you could push it up against the wall in the daytime with the mattress and bedding on.

Under the bed there was kind of a chest there where you could store things, and two side ones to come down on—kind of a U shape, where you could store things.

You could fit in them in the daytime when the bed was against the wall. So Actually you could fit five or six people sitting in there quite comfortable when the bed was up. When the bed came down, there was room enough in the U-shaped part where I could put a sleeping bag for our little boy. I made a bag filled with wool just big enough to fit him, so it would be nice and warm in there. He was about two then.

Well, this is what we decided to do, to move out of the house, sell everything we had, and go into this trailer. My mother felt bad about it, because she new we had all the furniture, and it was still quite nice, and she said, "Well, store your furniture in our upstairs," (in Provo, of course). So that's what we decided to do.

It had a little sink in it, and one little cupboard, not very big. And then a little table that folded against the wall.

Merrill lined it, because it was just made of tin, and while we'd be sleeping in the night, water would condense from the tin onto us. Every morning the rain would fall!

So he got up and made firewood while the water was falling in drops. So he lined it with plywood/panel board, and I painted it yellow and green. He laughed when he saw how I painted it, I had more paint on me than on the cabin! But it was fun.

We lived this way two years to save money. We didn't have lights or phone or radio or TV. We took walks (once I pulled Nolan to town in a coaster wagon and turned around and walked back... about eight or nine miles, just for the fun of it, and still had supper ready for my honey). We went camping on days off, and always on Saturday we'd take a swim. This doubled as a good bath, our no. 3 tub wasn't too roomy. We carried water. He chopped wood to burn. I scrubbed clothes on the board, and ironed them with irons and heated on the wood-burning stove. It was just like a wood-burning stove you'd take camping, made out of tin.

We used a coleman lantern, so we didn't even have to pay for electricity.

There were only three of us. It was a challenge, but it was fun, too.

When Merrill lined it, well, that it made it a little bit shorter. It had been just barely tall enough for his to walk around in, because the man that built it was kind of short, too. Anyway, it was barely big enough for him to walk around without banging his head in the middle. But after we lined it, there was only one

place he could stand up without banging his head a little, and that was right over the stove, since that spot didn't matter so much if it got a little condensed with moisture.

I've thought about that a lot—my golly we went through a lot there. He had to bend his head a little, and it took him a little while to catch on—he he'd be sitting there, then stand up, and BONG!

We had one thing that we'd do every Saturday while we were there. We were really lucky we had a really good baby tender—she was a special girl. She would take Nolan every Saturday night and we'd go out swimming. That was our big event, and that's when we figured we got our good thorough bath. Because between times, we had to use our number three tub, which wasn't too exciting. You'd fill most of the trailer while you had it in there.

So once a week, we'd go swimming, and that was really fun. We had a couple of friends, Elsie and Albert Pots that we used to like to go out with. So we had a lot of fun out—we didn't have much time anyhow, because Merrill worked so many hours, and then if he did get a weekend off, we would go down to Provo or go up in the mountains once in a while.

Just before we got in the trailer Merrill started at the Brickyard, in 1936. We wanted to have a cellar of some kind to put our potatoes and carrots and things in, because one of our favorite dishes (I remember that year so well), we sliced the potatoes and carrots and onions all together and sort of fried them together. You put just a little bit of shortening—just enough to start and brown them a little bit. Then you put in about a cup of

water in the pan, put the lid on and turn the heat down low, or pull it to the back where there's not much heat. Then let them kind of steam cook. Oh, we ate so many of those while we were there! It was about the cheapest thing you could get, and besides we liked it. We wanted a way to be able to keep our vegetables so we could get by just buying two or three pounds at a time, because we couldn't grow it in the trailer, no way!

So Merrill had a hole in the ground close to the trailer and put them down there and put a lid on them and cover them over with dirt or something—sacks and stuff. And you know, they kept all winter that way!

Merrill made an outhouse, but when he made it, he forgot how long his feet were. He might have measured it long enough so his feet would go from the seat to the door, but he didn't think about the fact that you bend over. Well, when you'd bend over, the door would fly open! No place for you head.

Well, he wasn't about to make it over, so we just turned it around to face out to the field, so when the door would fly open, nobody'd see anyway, since there weren't too many houses back then.

Doyle and Inis had just got married, so they came out to stay with us a little while as Merrill was looking for work, and we let them sleep outside, because it was warm weather.

We did go on a trip or two—this one time we went with Doyle and Inis, and then there was a little bit of rainfall, but we decided to go anyway. Doyle said it was just a little flurry. It was the opening of fishing season, and they hadn't been married too long, and we went on this trip with them, and it just kept on

raining a little bit. We wanted to get established and stay somewhere the night before fishing, because it opened the next morning. Well, the darn rain just wouldn't let up, so you couldn't get out and make a bed, and we didn't have such a thing as a camp. We couldn't afford anything like that, but we had a little night car, and that was one where you could put the front seat back and it would go out flat so you could make a bed in it. So we made a bed in there that night and slept, all four of us. And every time someone had to turn over or wiggle, everybody else had to turn over! We were packed like sardines, all four of us, two women in the middle of course, and Nolan was at the foot. He was just a little boy, and he would fit anywhere, so we put him down by our feet and tried to sleep and spend the night out. We kept thinking, "Well, we ought to go home, it's silly to be out when we keep getting this little drizzling rain."

Doyle would say, "Oh, but it will clear up soon. It's just a flurry."

Oh, that little flurry!

So the next morning we got up, and Merrill went out and put his rain-coat on—he had one of those, and went out and he was fishing anyway in the rain. I don't remember if he ever caught anything or not, but that wasn't too successful a trip, but we had a lot of fun just being together anyhow.

And then another time, (they only stayed with us a month or so) after they had gone, we decided we wanted to take another weekend trip, Merrill and I, and my mother said she'd be glad to tend Nolan that week. We went by ourselves, and boy did we get in a storm that night! We went up of Skyline Drive, toward Ferrin

reservoir. We were up there in the mountains, and boy, if you'd ever been in the mountains while there's a thunder and lightening storm! Oh, that lightening just made those mountains go purple! And the thunder just seemed to crash from one wall of rocks to the other wall, and the mountains would echo all around. Oh, wow, was I scared!

Merrill said, "Well, you don't need to worry, because lightening won't hurt you if you're in your car, because of the tires. But all night I was kind of worried about it. We opened up a can of peas and corn and ate them cold in the car. You couldn't get out because it was too rainy, and you couldn't get out on the roads.

The next morning Merrill decided he wanted something warm. He wasn't about to eat more cold peas and corn. So he put on his shoes and that was about all, without going into details. He didn't want to get his clothes wet. He made a fire under a tree where it was sheltered a little bit, and got us some hot water for some Postum, and fixed some other stuff and fried it all up in the frying pan, and brought it backed to the car where we ate it. But I laughed and laughed at how funny he looked by the fire. Well, he never got his clothes wet!

The road was *so* muddy, and it was that thick clay, so when we started the next morning and tried to go up there, the mud would just roll up real thick on the tires, and there was just no way you could move, so we would have to sit there until it kind of dried out. The sun came out and shined.

There we were, we felt like well, here we finally get us a chance for a little vacation, even if it was just a weekend, because

that was a headache in those days. Here we sat, couldn't move, and Merrill was worried because he knew he had to get back to his job. We thought about it a lot since, that we should have just been glad and enjoyed what we had, but you do worry.

There was one time in the trailer I got a little bit restless. Nolan was two or three years old. He lived there three years. I thought, what am I going to do all day? He was really good about entertaining himself. We got him a little coaster wagon for Christmas, and I thought, *why don't I take him for a ride?* So I put a pillow in there and asked him if he wanted to go for a ride, and see said, "Oh, sure!"

So we started out, and I just kept walking and walking and walking. We left right after Merrill left for work at 8:00am, and went clear up to fourth south! I even went over where the post office was, and then I thought, *good grief, I can't take this thing on the bus, so I guess I better get walking back!* I still wasn't tired, but I walked back again. We got back about 2:00 in the afternoon, and we both laid down for a nap. But I wasn't really that tired. Never did get stiff or anything from it, so I must have been in pretty good physical condition.

It just seemed like we had more time for doing things because we didn't have a lot of outside yard work, and we just had each other. We had some of our happiest memories.

Living in the trailer wasn't always so gruesome. We had a lot of fun on our weekends and times when we could go. This time Merrill was working at the Brickyard, so he had Sundays off, and sometimes Saturday or Saturday afternoon, and it was such a thrill to us to be able to look forward to that day off. We'd do

things, and when company would come, why, we'd usually go to the park or somewhere. A few times we had a picnic lunch in the pasture, because we kept it clean where the trailer was. We had places they could sit, and it wasn't really that bad. The only thing that made it kind of bad was when company'd come to stay overnight, there was just no place for them.

I remember my mother had to come up once because her sister was operated on in LDS Hospital, and there was no place for her to stay except at our place.

So Merrill scooted against the wall, and I was in the middle and my mom was on the outside in a family bed, and Nolan underneath. There wasn't very many days like that, but that did make me feel kind of bad, and it made Merrill feel bad, too, to think that we couldn't offer better accommodations for her. But she was real understanding and Merrill went up and picked her up at the hospital, and would take her up whenever she needed. Of course, when it came time, we took her home again.

There was one real good thing about living in the trailer. You sure didn't have room to collect anything. I'd go in the store to buy something, I'd see a pretty can or dish or something, and I'd think, "Well, where would I put it?"

I only had one tiny cupboard anyhow, and we didn't need it. So that way we also saved a little bit of money, and by doing that, in under two years we had enough for a down payment on a place.

When I saw the ad in the paper for a little two-roomed house with a garage on it, our dreams started to come true. It was wonderful to finally be able to buy our own place.

It was just a half acre of ground with a little garage on it, but the people had made this garage into a place they could live in. It was about 14X20, so we moved from our trailer into that.

That just seemed like a *lot* of room after being so boxed up. At least then we could have an extra bed if someone did come to stay with us. We appreciated that.

Chapter 40: Corky

We decided it was time to have a little more family. We'd been having such a hard time before this that it was all we could do to take care of ourselves and one little boy. But I really wanted more children, and I'd enjoyed my first boy so much that I was really happy when I knew that we were going to have a second child.

When I was expecting Corky (Kay), my neighbor across the street—a German lady, who came from Germany but married an American—she was expecting a little boy at the same time. So we kept in touch with each other about this awful man called Hitler. Hitler was just going through one country after another, and called it a bloodless victory, where they would go in and talk to the key man. He claimed he was trying to recover ground that they had had before world war one. Her folks lived in a place called Dansig in Germany.

Hitler had gone through these other countries, and would promise the ruler, "I'll keep you in power, and I won't hurt any of

your people, and I'll just come in. You can still have your government the way you want it, but you'll be subject to us," I guess—I don't know just how he put it. But he just took them back one after another. He claimed they used to be Germany. Then he took over Dansig, and that's where her folks were, and she didn't get any letters, of course—everything was cut off. And she'd come over and just cry to me. She said, "Why did he have to have *everything?* He's already got Germany, but now he's stretching out to these other countries."

We'd hear Hitler talking on the radio sometimes, and though we couldn't understand the language, he really had power over those people. I never understood how people could fall for it, except they thought he was a great hero—he's going to put Germany on the map, and all that. And they were trained from the time they were young that they were the super race, and they really thought they were. They had all that about kicking out the Jews and anyone who wasn't "super" Arian, the super race.

It was a scary thing! It really was!

Then when they took over Dansig and her parents were with another family, it effected her. She did hear from them later, but these things were all so real, and something that just lived with us every day.

My cousin Joe went in to serve in the army. They advanced into Germany, and had many great victories—he was in that. His mother was my mother's sister, and she had four boys go into the army. They were all boys that were well known to me, just like brothers almost. She was so sure she'd never see those boys again. It was really sad. She came up and she saw them off at

the train, and I went to see them off, too. She said, "I know I'll never see them again."

I said, "Oh, don't think like that, aunt Lucy, of course you will!"

And she says, "No, I just have this feeling I'll never see them again."

And you couldn't get her out of it.

Well, all her boys came back, but when they came back *she* wasn't there. She got sugar diabetes, and she worried and worried and worried, and it just got her. So she didn't see her children again.

These were such awful times, and I guess that's why you remember them, but don't like to talk about it.

Ten months after we moved to the house on Penny Avenue, Kay Merrill Curtis was born March 5, 1939. Such a cute round faced baby with dark hair and eyebrows like mine. How dearly we loved him, and spoiled him some. We'd been strict with Nolan, who was almost five then. Where Nolan had been easy to handle and rather quiet and easy to talk to, then came his brother, all full of action and noise.

Suddenly we had ourselves a family! They were both such wonderful kids, different in many ways, but very special because they belonged to us.

The morning Kay was born, there was snow on the ground, and I had gone three weeks overtime with Nolan, so I figured I'd go overtime with Kay, too, but I didn't. He came right on the day he was supposed to come. I had arranged with the

doctor and the nurses they would come to our home and the baby would be born in our home. So I woke up that morning and I said, "Guess what! I think this is the day!"

We didn't have any telephone or anything, so Merrill had to go get a phone to go call the doctor.

He hurried out of there, and there was a little bit of snow on the ground, and there was a hole that he didn't know about, and he stepped into that, because it was covered with the snow, and twisted his ankle.

Well, he went and called the doctor anyhow, and came back, his ankle all swelled up, you know. Seemed like like he had as much trouble with his ankle as I had with the baby! He couldn't even walk on it, it was so bad.

I got along just beautiful, and having another little boy—Oh, I was so happy! My mother staying with us, too. And she was just thrilled to death to think we had another boy, because most of hers had been girls. I said, "Well, I kind of wanted a little girl," Naturally, anybody wants both kinds.

She looked at him and said, "Oh, but just look at this little feller, how cute he is."

I looked at him and just lost my heart. He was such a beautiful child.

Merrill looked at him and said, "That kid looks just exactly like his mother. There isn't *one thing* about him that looks like me."

My mother said, "Oh, yes there is! There is *something.*"

We got a chuckle out that.

Anyway, he brought such joy into our family, we loved him so much.

Of course, Nolan was almost five by then.

Chapter 41: Verna

We really enjoyed our little house. It had plenty of room so Merrill could work on it, and have a nice garden in the back. And in the front, we had a nice lawn, and he let me have the west side of the lawn, where I planted flowers, and oh, I had such a pretty flower garden there! I brought flowers from my mothers home—the orange ones called corn lilies, and also some little memorials babies—they're like little white shasta daisies. I had these all along the side, and several other plants that I put in.

I'd always wanted roses to round the fence, and one day I saw an ad in the paper that they had roses for 29 cents each—climbing roses. Oh, boy! You know, that was quite a bit of money then, well, I just had to have me some roses.

I bought a whole bunch of them, and I went out there and planted them all along the south and east side of the fence, and the entire fence was covered in roses. And on the west side was my daisies and lilies and other things that I grew.

It was really a beautiful place. Grass, with all these flowers surrounding on the outside. There was some small fruit trees. One was a plum, and I think an apricot. It was just an ideal place for the children to play, and Merrill fenced it all in, so you had to open a gate to get into this part. I would go out there with the little children and close the gate, and they'd play and run on the grass, climb the tree, and have a ball while I was doing my flowers.

Merrill enjoyed his boys so much, but still wanted a girl.

I was anxious to have a family now. I figured we'd waited long enough between the first two, and we were so happy.

Sixteen months later, Verna came to town, our first little girl. Her father was so happy to finally have a little girl. She was born August 24, 1940. We were so happy to get our first little girl after eight years of waiting.

It was hard in two rooms, because we had to have our bed and crib in our front room. The kitchen was so tiny that whenever we had company it was kind of bad because there was no door in between, and we had to put Kay to sleep in the front room. He didn't want to sleep while the light was still on.

So I was really thrilled when they said we could get a loan and add on to our home.

We had added two bedrooms and a bathroom onto our house. Even thought the house was small, at least they had rooms, and we could close the door. We had one room with the two little boys, and the other room we took the baby in with us. It was

really nice having a bathroom, so we didn't have to run out the trail like we had done for quite a long time.

The two new rooms didn't look like a garage now. We had good gardens. I raised some beautiful flowers, especially Shasta daises, and put red roses along our front fence.

Merrill fenced in the front part of the place so the children could play there and while they played I'd tend to my flowers. I also canned lots of fruit each year, doing almost 1000 quarts. It was always 300 peaches at least, with lots of apricots and tomatoes and pears and prunes.

The whole house, if you could imagine it, was about 20 feet by 26 feet, so that wasn't very big. After a while we found out we were going to get Patsy, too, and we hadn't exactly planned to get her so soon, but we still wanted a family, and we were still glad that she was coming. We expected her at the end of December, about Christmastime, but she was born early, in November.

Chapter 42: Patsy

I had little Patsy, fifteen months after her sister, Nov 25, 1941. She only weighed four pounds—a tiny little thing. But she was healthy and strong and grew quickly. We were so happy to have her.

My mother had told me before Verna was born that this was the last time that she could be with me when one of my children were born, because her health was failing. She had Arthritis, and it was really getting hard for her to get around. So she said, "The next time, I want you to go to a hospital."

So I did. The doctor wanted me to go to Red Cross. Maybe it was a good thing, because Patsy was such a tiny baby. Those Catholic sisters, Nuns, Oh! They were so good! They watched over her so close. They'd always come into the room and tell me how that little tiny baby was doing. They were so kind and so good to her.

Patsy got along just fine—started gaining weight. I took her home from the hospital, and oh, we were so happy! Now we really

had a family, two boys and two girls. It just seemed like the perfect family. We were getting along just great.

Anyhow, now we had four children and just this little house. It was getting a little crowded, but we put Verna in the front room with the boys, and they got along all right. They each had their own beds. That was one thing I was determined about, that my children would each have their own individual bed. Because all the time I was growing up, after I got a sister, which was when I was about three years old, I had sisters sleeping with me. Even at the time I was married, there were three of us in a bed, and I was determined that my children would have their individual beds. Well they did! So that was nice.

I guess I had those three children in two and a half years.

The second world war was on, and I was worried about Merrill going to war. Everyone was worried. All the time I carried my fourth child we wondered if America would get into the war, or if my husband would have to go.

Oh, you just don't know what it's like if you haven't lived through a war, because you see your cousins go, and all your relatives and neighbors. Even my brother Doyle went into the merchant marines, and all the time I thought Merrill might be called any time, because they weren't stopping just because they had children. That didn't keep you back, and he was put in A1, and there was nothing holding him back.

I thought, "What in the world will I do with these four little children if he gets called off to war?"

He had important work up there, hauling to the steal plant and the hospitals and fields. He did lots and lots of Sunday work,

too, during the war-time, and it gave me all that more time to think and worry. Plus trying to run around and take care of these children, not having a sister or brother, mother, or dad nearby, since they lived so far away.

Eventually it all caught up with me, having babies close, and doing the canning, and worrying about the war and other things. Maybe that's why Patsy was born early.

I was home with Patsy, two weeks after she was born, when they told us about Pearl Harbor on the radio, December 7, a quiet Sunday morning. I was holding Patsy. It just couldn't be true. The Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor.

They talked about how the ships were going down. It was such a horrible thing, like listening to some kind of horror movie or play. I couldn't believe it was really real. How awful it was!

We'd been reading things in the paper about it. There was this one representative who had come over from Japan , and he was at the White House talking like he was making peace. This was in the papers, and I'd been reading that, because I had plenty of time for reading when I had a little baby.

It came as such a shock. We thought things would wind down, and things would be peaceful. Then all at once, here we were right in the middle of it.

Pearl Harbor started another war for our country. We felt we had no choice. I was so worried about Merrill going to war. His brother was in the Merchant Marines. I had cousins going. It was a time to worry. Hitler seemed to be going through every country. Merrill was reclassified from A-1 to "Hardship" on account of my health and our family.

After Patsy was born, I became ill. It was really critical, and I guess I almost had a mental breakdown for a little while. I try not to think about that time. It's too hard to talk about, and we both really grieved over that. It was a sad time. Merrill kind of wondered if I'd ever be normal and natural again.

Nolan was in school now. He was so good to help me when he came home. He was good to entertain the little ones – to read to them and tell them stories.

I was so ill I really didn't care if I lived or died. I even wondered if there was a God to care about us.

Mental illness can be so much worse than physical. Mom knew I was ill and I needed special care and love. So she took me home to her place and watched over my little ones for me.

One day I insisted she call dad from his work. I told him I had seen two men standing at the foot of my bed and they were all dressed in white, and I felt like they were going to take me with them. They kept standing there waiting for the right time. I wasn't scared or worried or afraid. You come and the "men" disappeared.

Dad sat down by me, and I just remember I just wanted you to be near me. I asked if him if he really believed the gospel (as we know it) was true—and his answer was so firm. "Of course it's true," as if there couldn't be any doubt.

And I believed because he believed. It was that simple, and that easy.

I know how awful it can be to be depressed enough to want to be "out of it all." Then afterwards to realize how truly wonderful life can be. It is a precious gift – to be appreciated. I'm

so thankful to have a loving companion – one who understood and loved me in spite of everything. And one I love with all my heart and soul—to be blessed with such good children. Surely God sent his choicest spirits into our home. I was there.

But for a while I had one awful struggle with Satan. And at one time he'd almost convinced me I was a complete failure, that I could never be the kind of person I wanted to be–I was sure my family would be better off without me—I walked all one night with that torment. It would have been easier to just give up. One thing helped. I couldn't be sure it was the right thing to do, and I prayed about it. I didn't get an answer then. But by morning I decided to try to not think so much of my own life and start to live with the idea of helping others. I put my trust completely in the Lord and that was when I started to get better. I know we are told that if we lose our lives [in the way] we find them – it's true. I found so much joy in life after that. Besides That I had six more wonderful children. It's been my constant desire ever since to help others. It's not always easy to know how. I could have given more detail in face to face talk.

Anyhow, I had the feeling as time went on, that if I had another child, I would regain my health. It seems nature has a way of helping a woman at a time like that.

My sister and brother in law, Inis and Doyle had a little baby boy. Oh, he was such a cute little thing, and I told Merrill, "If I could just have one more baby, I think I'd be all right."

Well, I talked through August, September, October, and November. No deal, he said I had to get better.

By then, Patsy was about two years old, and I figured I was strong enough—and I really thought that nature would help to heal my body. So finally by December, he said if I *really* what I figured I wanted, we could have another child.

Chapter 43: Delon

Delon was born the next September, and he was just pure joy from the start. But he was really a wanted child.

Sure enough, I did feel better, and by the time he was born September 24, 1944, I had my health back again.

That was really a happy day. Delon was a beautiful child with dark hair and bright eyes – so alert, so loved and wanted. I'll always believe he helped me get my good health back again. Things were looking up, and I was a lot healthier, and cheerful and happy all the time. It was a good time to be alive.

I did feel blessed that we got through this ordeal.

Most women hate the idea of a 30th birthday, but that was one of the happiest I ever had. My health had improved, I could handle any problems with ease. I knew my family love me and needed me, and best of all, we had another little boy.

Conditions were getting better, but we were also kind of crowded with five children in that little tiny house. We were thinking of building onto the front of the house, because we were

already set back in the lot quite a ways. He wanted to add on in the back of the house.

I went along with him, and said I guessed it would be okay in the back, and we'd have a nice big kitchen and an extra bedroom in back. It would be nice. So he went to work on it, and he measured it all out, and even dug the foundations and poured the cement—had it all squared off and everything, and I went out to look at it. He had it all figured how we would do it. There I learned one big lesson in life I'd like to pass on to you children.

I said, "Well, yeah, honey, but I'd still rather have it added onto the front." You just don't do that to a man after he's done all that work, and planned and figured it would be okay. He probably even had his lumber figured out and everything.

He said, "Well, that does it. If I could do all this work and you're still not satisfied, I'll be darned if I'll do it!" And he just started throwing dirt into the trenches.

I said, "Oh, don't do that! I was just desperate. Please don't do that! I'll still like it, and still enjoy it."

He said, "You still won't be satisfied." So he filled it all in and, oh, I felt bad, because I probably been happy there, but I just had to put in that woman's remark.

Then later he told me (which if he'd told me in the first place, I probably would have understood better) "Well, I'm not too good of a carpenter. All I know about building is what I picked up on my own. I figured I could do something in the back, and if it didn't turn out to look too good, it wouldn't matter, because it'd be at the back of the house,"

And the front of the house did look nice. He said, "If I added onto the front of the house, and made a botch of it, it would look worse than ever."

The whole thing was, I had so much confidence in him, I just figured he could do anything.

Well, that killed the idea of adding on. So we started looking around for another place. Plus I desperately wanted to move to another location to get away from sorrows and unhappy memories.

I'd always had this idea of having fruit trees, because every year we'd buy so much fruit, and I said, "If only we had our own fruit trees, just look at the money we'd save."

I found out about a place in Sandy, five acres, 200 young fruit trees, and I thought a complete change of environment would really help me.

It was only a couple rooms, but we could see where we could add onto that, and maybe have a better feeling about it.

Merrill agreed, and I was just thrilled to death. You could look out at that time and it was one of the row of first houses out there, and you could look out across the valley, and it was beautiful! It was up on the bench on 13th east and 85th south. It was really nice out there. We got it for $4,500. Can you imagine? Merrill already had 1,800 saved from his war bonds that he'd been buying all this time. So we easily had our down payment and could make the switch and not sell our house. We rented our house to Merrill's brother, Doyle.

We moved out there when Delon was almost a year old. Nolan was in the sixth grade, Kay in the first. Verna started

kindergarten. Every morning she'd cry because Patsy couldn't go, and every day Patsy would cry because she had to stay home. They did enjoy each other's company so much.

Kay was talking one morning when he was little:

Wished I was a bird, then I could fly
Like that bird, clear up the sky
Course if'n I was a bird, I'd hafta sleep in the rain
'N eat worms... Guess I'd sooner be me again.

Course it might be nice to be a cat
N stay up late, N things like that
And I'd yowl when Dad got to sleep, gee
But I'd have to eat mice N rats... druther be me

Chapter 44: Sandy

We lived in Sandy a year. We had 200 laying hens, a horse, rabbits. How I enjoyed working in our garden – picking the fruit, canning it, and selling it. I liked to turn the irrigation water in, and water the whole place. The children followed me and helped me, and Delon was always eating fruit. I fed the hens and gathered eggs, and was busy and happy all day. Our two oldest boys (11 and 6) slept in a small, one-roomed building not far from the house, but closer to the barn and coops.

One cold winter night I checked on them as they went to bed and I had a strange feeling they were in danger. I checked the heater, but it had burned out and everything else seemed all right, but I asked a quiet prayer for their safety after I closed their door.

That night I had a terrible dream of fire and I woke to hear the neighbor's dog barking, and then a sudden banging on the door and our neighbor shouting, "Your place is on fire!"

Merrill and I ran to the window and it looked like the boys room. We ran out and could see it was the barn, so Merrill said he

would let the horse loose and try to get the chickens out and for me to get the boys up and not let them go back for anything. I found them sleeping their double bed, the two little guys curled up in the middle of the bed with their heads covered with the quilt, and I thought "they never would have wakened."

I got them up and outside, just as the flames leaped from the barn to the coops and their room.

Sure enough, Nolan had forgotten one of his shoes and yanked at my hand to go back. He was determined to go back for that shoe. He said, "They're *new* shoes."

But I held onto him and promised we'd buy more. If Merrill hadn't warned me to hold onto them, he might have dashed into the burning building. Merrill went in once, and threw out a bike and radio, and all the clothes he could gather quick. And just after he came out, the roof caved in.

Merrill also saved the horse... rabbits escaped, but we lost all of our chickens, several sacks of feed, tools, clothes, and many other valuables.

After that, people would come around and say, "It's such a shame!" and "It's so awful," how we'd lost 200 chickens and a whole lot of feed we were feeding them, and some of our tools, and a lot of valuable equipment, besides the buildings.

But you know, Merrill and I, neither one of us could feel too sad. We had our boys, and we'd come so close to losing them that all the other losses seemed pretty small.

One thing we soon learned from our children: it's better to include them in your activities whenever possible. If you don't, you may get a surprise.

I remember one morning Merrill was off to work early. They wanted a brick on the job by eight. I gave him a kiss and watched him leave. I always had an empty feeling, as if he had actually take part of my heart with him.

I knew the children were sleeping, so I decided to work a little while in the garden. It was so cool and quiet there. Birds were waking.

Our tomato plants were looking good. They'd probably taste just fine. I pulled a few small weeds that were sneaking in to the rows of peas, and I also got a few bigger weeds from the outside edges.

Before the sun could get over the mountain, I heard my baby cry. He'll be hungry and needed a change. I reached for the hose to wash off my hands.

Two little girls came running out in their nighties, calling, "Baby wake up!"

I said, "I know, I'm coming."

"Whatcha doing?" they asked.

"Oh, just pulling weeds," I said. "Now let's get in there and see what's up."

While I took care of my baby boy, they got dressed and ran back outside. The yard was fenced. They couldn't get out to the street. I figured they' gone to their swing or sandpile.

After my baby was bathed and fed, he settled down in his crib, and I went out to check on the girls.

"Verna and Patsy came running to me, saying, "Look, we picked weeds, too."

Their hands were filled with tomato plants.

"Oh, no," I said, "those are not weeds. Those are daddy's tomatoes."

I got them to lay the plants down and I said, "Maybe we can plant them again."

The plants were so muddy. That would help. Carefully I tucked each one back into the soil. The girls felt so bad. It was hard to explain, to teach them, but they had to know.

So after we were all through talking and planting, I told them we were going to take a picture so they would remember to not do that again. We rinsed the mud out of their clothes. I let them stand on a chair to hang up.

That was when I took the picture. I don't ever remember losing another tomato plant, but I do remember how carefully I tried to teach them which weeds to pull, and to wait until mom or dad could help them next time.

There are many things children can learn to do. They are interested. They want to help. But it really helps if an older person is there to show them the correct way to do things. Anyone can be a teacher—a mom, a dad, an older brother or sister, even a neighbor or friend. Wouldn't it be a wonderful world if every little child had good teachers?

I always wanted to be a good teacher, but it always seemed like I was the one that was doing the most learning.

I was married by the time Ruby met Warren. She always knew he was older then she was, but none of us knew how much older. He said he was Merrill's age, and he looked it, and acted like it. He was so full of fun. He and Merrill were really good friends right away. They were so much alike in so many ways. They were both hard-working men. They both love their families more than anything in this world. They were both good at raising gardens, and fixing anything that needed fixing in the house. They both like to hunt and fish. We had lots of fishing trips together, the four of us, and then later with her children.

Ruby and Warren started to buy a house and they wanted to have children. No one knows why, but for some reason it just didn't happen. Then after about six years, he went out of town to work and left her for a week or two. When he came home something wonderful happened. I remember they came to Salt Lake to see us. I was expecting my third child. I hated to tell her about it because I knew she wanted to baby so much, but when I did she said, "We are expecting too."

She was so happy.

They had tried to adopt a little girl. She had stayed with them quite a while, then the mother wanted her back. I said to Ruby, "It must've been hard to let her go."

"Well, not really," she said, "We found out we are going to have one of our own."

I don't think any child was more welcomed or more loved than that little girl. Warren would even take her for a ride at night so she could go to sleep easier.

Chapter 45: Busy Winter

Corky was in first grade. He loved to gather bugs and worms and pollywogs, etc.

Nolan was such a good helper – a good baby-tender, always dependable. Many times I left him with the children and went to town on the bus. He tended them by entertaining them—playing games or reading stories, etc. He was a hero in their eyes (and a good example).

Patsy and Verna were like twins, always playing together.

We still figured we'd add on and have a nice place there. And then (you know how things happen) I found out I was going to have another baby, and I thought, "Oh my gosh, it's already going to be crowded with five children in four little rooms—and if we get another little baby, that will be six. And even if we get this much added on, it will be hard."

Besides that, I had become a little disillusioned on the fruit business. We'd had so much fruit, and oh, it was lovely fruit! But do you think people would buy it? They were just super fussy!

They saw a little bruise or something wasn't right, boy you'd sure hear about it.

I tried to sell it by putting it out in front of the place and tell people about it, and ended up doing most of it ourselves. I remember in that one year we put up about a thousand quarts. That's a lot of work if you've ever tried it.

I could see then that maybe it had been a mistake to come out here. Maybe we better look around for something bigger.

By spring, after school was out, we decided to come back to our old neighborhood. We'd found a big old-fashioned house on fifth east (3537 south 500 east) that was available, and we *could* get it. So that was one of the reasons to sell. We had to put plumbing in, bath, furnace, and repaint, but at least we were closer to school.

We sold the house for just a little more than we'd paid for it, so we didn't lose anything on the deal—besides the buildings that were gone, so we were lucky to get the price out of it that we did. We didn't lose anything on it, but we didn't gain a lot.

I sure gained a lot in experience.

The day we moved into the house on fifth east was in September, the first day of school. I had the first load of furniture, and Merrill dropped me and the children (three then) off at Lincoln, registered my school kids, walked home and already didn't feel very good. I walked into the kitchen, and there were bushels of fruit that I had to put up before I could even get settled. Oh, I'll never forget how big they looked to me.

Then I helped unload furniture and peaches. We had about a dozen bushel that had to be done right away. What a job,

moving in, canning fruit, and getting kids started in school. It was hectic. Kids helped when they came from school. Besides, I was expecting another baby.

It was a busy day, putting up fruit, and trying to move in, and getting kids all started in school all in the same day. So if any of you girls think you're having it rough sometimes, remember other people are, too!

I was so glad when the plumber came to put in our sink and bathroom. I was busy cleaning the place—painting, papering, and Merrill was plastering holes over, putting in windows and getting the cellar waterproofed. What a busy winter!

While moving, Ruby and Warren dropped in. Warren was helping Merrill, but Ruby said, "I brought some food for us to eat."

We threw together some sandwiches, and then we cut open a big watermelon. What a thoughtful way to help out. I was tired and hungry from packing furniture, and I dreaded the idea of getting a meal ready. I really loved her that day. Maybe it would seem ordinary to some, but not to me. I also remember the many times Warren and Merrill would decide to take a ride and a picnic and I said, "I haven't got anything ready."

Ruby pitched in, usually doing dishes are cleaning up one of the little ones, or grabbing the broom. She did in such a quiet way no one could take offense. She only wanted to help. And she did, many times.

We'd just been there a little while when some home-teachers came around to see us, and they were telling Merrill

about some family that was having it kind of hard, and he wanted to know if he'd give a contribution for it or something—come and hep out the poor.

Merrill said, "Well, I'd love to, but my children don't even have a bed to sleep in."

I remember that like it was yesterday, because their beds had burned up, and we hadn't gotten around to getting any more. We didn't have any kind of floor coverings on our floor. It was just the hard old boards, and boy they were rough boards—knotty pine, old wood with holes in it, and wall paper was hanging in strips in the ceiling and the walls. There were seven broken window Merrill had to fix. They'd dug up plaster in the kitchen and stuffed in Japanese newspapers. Japanese people had had been living there for two or three years. It was really something—speckles all over everything from you-know-what, and you couldn't even scrub them off!

Out in the backyard was nothing but weeds higher than my head, ashes dumped all over, and of course an outside tran that was about to fall over; apple trees were hanging clear over and touching the ground. It was like a jungle out there, and many yellow or dieing and others dead; glass everywhere. One of the first things we did was go around picking up glass so the kids wouldn't get cut.

There was no running water. All there was was just a well out there by the willow tree, and it had to have a big vat to run into outside so you could dip up the water to bring it in. Even the outhouse needed moving. I was afraid it was going to collapse when he moved it, it was so wiggly!

We made a lot of changes. Down in the cellar there was room for one bedroom, and it was half-full of water, and boy did it stink! There was sauerkraut and rotten cabbage, maybe other things, I don't know. One of the first things we did was bail out that thing and get it down to bottom. Then we ripped off the loose paper that was hanging around all over, and got it straightened up.

That was September. We had it pretty well organized by Thanksgiving in November, and I said to Merrill, "Wouldn't it be nice to escape this place for a little while, and go down to my mother's and have Thanksgiving dinner?" because she'd invited us.

Merrill said, "Nothing doing! I got a whole day off, I'm working on these floors!"

So he went and got a sander, and oh! They were rough. I was glad he sanded two of the rooms—the kitchen and front room, but the bedrooms there was nothing you could do. He had to put new floor in those. That's why they were higher than the others. That was how we spent our first Thanksgiving there, he stopped long enough to eat dinner. Boy he worked at that, but it was good because it was smoothed. You know how it is with children, they just will not keep their shoes on all the time. They get slivers and stumble all over the place. It was bad, and we couldn't afford any linoleum.

None of the place was fenced. Right on the front there was two big lilac bushes, very much like the lilac that was later on the south of our house, only they weren't as bushy as that. They were

kind of old and straggly, but they were still lilacs, one on each side of where the gate was later.

Of course we had to have a fence there because there was so much traffic and the kids would be right out in it. So that was another thing he put in right away.

Merrill said, "Well, if I put a fence in here, I'll have to take down these lilacs."

I said, "Oh, don't move them! I like lilacs."

"Well," he said, "it's your fence or your lilacs, one or the other."

I thought, *well my children are more valuable than the flowers*.

I said, "Well just try to dig them up and set them out in the back, anyway, because there's plenty of room out there.

He said, "They'll never live! They're too big."

I said, "Well, try it!"

So he tried it to please me, and one lived, so I was half right.

I liked that lilac, because it was the old fashioned kind that smelled so good.

The lawn was terrible, what little bit there was—a little dab in front. All it was was a big bunch of clumps. Merrill gradually worked around doing that, and our dream was to get a lawn in that back, boy! How I remember that.

We decided to sell the Penny Avenue house to Merrill's brother, Doyle, and that helped to pay off the 5th east place. We practically had it paid for in just a little while, and also enough left over to get me my first brand new electric range. Oh, was that a happy day!

Before that, I'd had a little one with hot plates in an oven, but this one was full-scale electric range, and I sure was happy. Now, for the first time, I could put up fruit without heating the whole house on the coal stove, because all my fruit had been put up on the coal stove before that. Every time you'd get those boilers full of bottles and start boiling, boy, everybody got roasted out!

Merrill also fixed the cellar so he could put a furnace down there. That was one of the first things he did. We had heaters for a year or two.

The first winter we had a heater in the front room and the kitchen, Merrill thought maybe the chimney might need cleaning out. He's got to tell you about this. Merrill said:

"I thought it was a good idea to swab those old chimneys with something, because that soot would gradually collect in there, and it would get so tight that the smoke won't escape very good—you won't get a good draft. So I fixed up a swab and went up on top of the house and I told my wife, 'Now you get on this ladder and hold this tub. When anything comes down, you can catch it so it won't go all over the floor.'

"Well, I went up on the top and swabbed the thing down. I got about what I thought was clear, and I came down and walked in, and all I could see was something black.

"I said, 'What the h— happened to you?!'

"The house was full, and she was *covered* in soot. And she just stood there, so I guess she thought it was some kind of joke I'd pull on her, but I never expected it to be so much stuff coming out

of the chimney. It was just so plugged, and I guess nobody had ever swabbed in years and years. So I told her, 'Well, you go take a bath and I'll clean this up.'

"She was glad to do it!"

Finally we had room to have a cow, a horse, and a nice pasture—a little stream that went through the middle of it. Quite a bit different than in later years. The ground was more damp. The stream even had water crests in it, and I remember the boys even got some fish put in there, and the fish would thrive!

Merrill built a garage after fixing the inside of the house. He bought a Hudson, and of course he had to have a garage to put the Hudson in, so it was a little easier this time, because he'd already built one, so he made this one twice as big—a double garage. I was really proud of him. I figured that was really good workmanship for someone that didn't ever have any building experience, to just start out and do things the way he did.

We were quite happy to go there. The children could walk to school, and that was a big thing. Where we'd previously lived, they'd had quite a ways to go to school, and I'd worry a little bit about that, because Verna was just starting school. She went to Kindergarten, and every day I had a time of it.

Chapter 46: Rosemary

Then on March 5, 1947, on her brother Kay's eighth birthday, little Rosemary Susan was born... so tiny... three and a half pounds. I guess the poor thing was having trouble even getting that big, the mom was always so busy all the time, and always trying to fix up the house to make things livable for the rest.

They put her in oxygen to help her breathe at first. When she was three days old, I walked to the nursery to see her and the nurse was trying to feed her with a bottle and nipple. She was too weak and tired to drink and I got so upset. I called the doctor and told him I wanted to take my baby home so I could feed her with a medicine dropper at first like I did Patsy.

Merrill was upset too. We both felt she might not live if we left her there.

The doctor was really upset, and he told Merrill, "Well, if you really want to take her there's nothing I can do to hold her

here, you're the parents, but I want you to know it's against my better judgement."

Merrill said, "Well, my wife wants her. She thinks she can handle her."

"Well, you'll have to sign a statement not holding me responsible."

We didn't care. We signed statements saying we wouldn't hold the doctor's or hospital responsible if something went wrong. Then they let us take her.

I had seen my baby, and I figured she was healthy and normal. To me she looked completely formed and perfect in every detail. She even had her tiny little eyelashes. She was just so small. I did lots of praying over her, every time I held her and cared for her.

At that time our room was the room we later used for a TV room, and we had a heater stove in there to keep her warm. I kept her in the room by herself. It was warm and I fed her a few drops of milk with a medicine dropper every hour or two, whenever she wakened and wanted food. Anyone who wanted to see her had to look through the window and I held her up for them to see. I wouldn't even let the other children near. I told them if they wanted to see her, they'd have to look through the glass window, and I'd hold the baby up so they could see her. I couldn't let her get any germs.

They all understood, and marveled that she was so tiny. She looked like one of these little dolls, maybe seventeen inches long. One of my little nephews, one of Inis's little boy, and he wanted to see her. So I showed her to him through the window,

and he never said a thing—just took off lickety-split for home. I thought, *what's with him?*

Later his mother told me that he said, "They said her head was as little as an orange, but it isn't the little kind of oranges that you buy for us. It's that big kind like Grandma buys."

That'll give you an idea how small she was.

But you know, that little thing just thrived. I knew she would.

Every time she woke up a little I would give her milk, and I did have to give it to her through a medicine dropper at first, but I gave it to her every hour or two, whenever she'd wake up enough to take it, because she was really week. She didn't have the strength to nurse in the natural way. But I only did this for about a week. After that she had already started to gain, and she did nurse natural and got along beautiful.

She grew so fast that when I took her back for a check-up at six weeks, the Dr. couldn't believe she was the same baby.

He said, "Why, she's almost grown double the size she was." he was really thrilled that I had brought her through like that.

I think sometimes a mother has an instinct about these things. A few years later, one day Rosemary was complaining because her eyes weren't too good. She couldn't see very well.

I said, "Rosemary, you be happy you've got eyes at all."

She said, "What are you talking about?"

"Well," I said, "I have heard since then that little babies left under that pure oxygen like they used to use in those days—it does something to their eyes, and a lot of babies that were under

oxygen too long go blind. You could have gone blind if you'd stayed there another day or two maybe."

They found this out, and they don't use pure oxygen like they did in those days—I don't know how they do it now, but their very conscious of this thing, and maybe even this was one reason I just felt like I had to get her out of there—I don't know. But I know when that feeling comes, and you know you're right, why, you better listen to it.

I knew she had special help besides mine. We had prayed almost constantly and felt sure the Lord answered our prayers. She was a very special baby, and dearly loved. She was also a plucky little baby, determined. Sometimes I think they were are born with special personalities. Right from the first she showed us she was a determined person, and it's a good thing she was, or she might not have made it. We were really happy to have her.

Right after Rosemary was born—just a little while after, my mother got really ill and went to the hospital. So I went down there, and of course I had to take my baby with, and I stayed with my sister Ruby for a little while.

We kind of ran of diapers, and we borrowed some of Warren's handkerchiefs. Can you believe that? A man's handkerchief was just right for a little diaper for her, that's how little she was.

Mother got Rheumatic fever, and was really ill. They said that she must have had it earlier when she was younger, that a lot of times it comes back when you're older. Anyway, she got it, and

she was really sick. She got over it, and she went home, but she was never strong again.

After that it wasn't too long until she had to go in a wheelchair, and later on she was an invalid.

That was the year we got a new baby *and* a new car. This was the first time in all our married life that we had ever bought a brand new car. And let me tell you, that was an event.

When the children got whooping cough, all seven got it at once. Merrill and I said if we ever come through that okay, we could stand anything. You just can't believe what that was like! Merrill would grab one child, and I'd grab another, and we'd try to get them to get their breath, and they'd cough so hard. Then they'd just whoop, and their breath would be gone. Their face would go black and you'd have to slap their face and run them to the cold water to throw on them. Then you'd get them dry to get their breath back again. And the next thing you know, they were just spitting up on everything. Oh, boy! All I could do was keep the washer running.

Besides, we were so afraid we might lose one of them. Merrill's cousin, Orson and Mary happened in, and at first I just thought they had a bad cold before they got this serious, and they said, "Are you sure your children don't have whooping cough?"

I said, "Well, I hadn't even thought about that, I thought it was funny they all caught cold at once."

Mary said, "It sounds like the start of whooping cough, they way they come and draw their breath back in. Boy, you better get them to a doctor."

I said, "I don't even know a doctor here," because that was the year after we'd moved to 5th east.

She said, "Well, I know a really good doctor, and I want you to promise me you'll get in touch with him."

That was Dr. Jeppson. She said, "He's my doctor, and he's really tops."

We called the doctor, and he came right down to our house and checked them, and he said, "Yes it sounds like whooping cough."

He gave them each a shot, and said, "That will help them to fight it. They'll need another one. I'm going to be out of town tomorrow, but I'll come in as soon as I come back. You be sure to give me a call."

So he went.

Well, the next day they were feeling pretty good, so I didn't bother to call the doctor, but do you know what? He came down on his own and he said, "I had quite a time finding you folks. I had to call your relatives and find out your address from there."

He had thought that much of us that he had contacted this other person that we told him about that was our relative, and he had got our address and come down. I think that was really special. But believe me, that taught me one lesson. From then on, any children got their shots as *soon* as they were old enough, because if you've ever seen whooping cough, oh! It's awful, just awful! And to have six of them all at once!

One day[14] Delon ran away on his tricycle. The other children had gone to a show or to play, and I had to find him myself. I left the baby in her crib and went towards 33rd south, as that was the direction I had seen him in last. When I got to Granite I couldn't see him in either direction. I was worried sick and asked a quick silent prayer.

"Please, Father in Heaven, which direction shall I take to find my little boy?"

Almost immediately someone said, "Go back home. Your little boy is there."

I couldn't believe it. I had looked everywhere before I left. I never thought about him coming back while I was gone. Anyhow I turned around and went back, thinking I should see how the baby was anyway.

As I neared the house, I had that same strange feeling that someone was near me and I heard the voice again.

"Go around the back."

And I did. I could see him way off in the pasture part of our lot, pulling his tricycle through the thick, tall grass and weeds. Once again I knew my prayers had been answered, so I took time to thank God before I went on with my work.

14 This was in 1947, according to a letter Leola wrote about it in 1948.

Chapter 47: Give Me Wisdom

That summer, when I was staying with Ruby, I could see how she loved my baby. One day as I put the baby in Ruby's crib, I thought, "What a shame it is that Ruby can't have another when she wants one so much, and as I was thinking I said half to myself, "Father, why is it she can't have another? She could easily take care of it. This little bed is empty and it seems a shame."

Again, although I hadn't thought I was praying I heard the same voice I heard when Delon was lost say, "It won't always be empty. She will have a child to put in it."

I asked, "An adopted child?"

And I heard the words, "No, a child of her own."

I really wanted to tell Ruby about it. I felt so sure of it, but thought maybe I better not.[15]

Again, they couldn't understand why it took so long to get another child. They decided that was probably all they'd get. Then, like a miracle, it happened again, and they were so happy

15 The event of Leola learning that Ruby would have a child took place in 1947, as recorded in a letter from Leola to her mother 3 Sep 1948

to get another little girl. Yes, Bernice and Roland did kind of surprised their mom, but they were just as welcome as any child could be. I'll never forget how Ruby loved her babies, how precious they were to her. She was always telling me the special things they did.

I remember one day she stopped by for just a few minutes. Roland was just old enough to climb. I'd been talking to Ruby in the front room and she said, "It's too quiet. I better check on him."

She found Roland in the sink. Yes, it was full of dishes, but he didn't care. She didn't scold. She just picked him up, grabbed a towel to put on her lap, and then she took off the wet shoes and stockings. I'll always remember her patience and her love.

When I pray, I know my prayer is heard. It may not be answered right away, but I know someone is working on the problem.

Sometimes it helps when we know that prayers are answered. Sometimes they aren't quite so definite, like one day. Kay had wanted to know how he could earn 15 cents for some batteries for his flashlight. I told him to pull some weeds out of the garden between the swiss chard and fence posts. I should have shown him, but I didn't, and he cleared a good big strip of little weeds in the middle of the garden. I should have praised him for it anyway. He was all sweaty and tired and hot, but I was busy and didn't take time to see that he'd done quite a bit.

He said, "Is dinner ready? Boy I'm hungry. I've been pulling weeds by the corn."

I said, "Well that's okay, that's worth a dime, but your Dad wants those big ones pulled by the fence, so you can do that after dinner."

He said, "Oh heck, after all I done—well, just for that I won't do anything." And he went out, slamming the door and ran out through the field.

I fed the rest of them and they went out to play. I felt kind of bad about it, knowing it was partly my fault for not explaining better in the first place and for telling him to do more when he was all ready hungry and tired. It wouldn't have seemed such a big job after dinner, and I could have told him then instead. So I was wishing I had more patience and understanding.

I thought, "Pretty soon he will come around again and I won't know how to handle him." So I sat there by the window. It was quiet, and I thought about like this, "Please God, give me the wisdom I need to understand and guide these children right."

I went about my work and Corky came walking in with his hands held behind him, he said, "Mother, I went out in the field and I found something I thought you'd like."

Then he pulled out his hand, from behind him, and held some cat-tails out to me. I didn't say much, and he said, "Do you like them okay?"

I said, "Yes, I like them, they are really nice. Your dinner is still on the table."

He started whistling and went in the kitchen and ate a good dinner. And I was glad that he at least didn't hold feelings... As anyone knows some days you have more problems than others, but I also found that a person has more courage and

understanding in solving those problems when they sit down and think it over with God now and then—sort of take Him into your confidence and tell Him things you could not say out loud. And sometimes the problems solve themselves.

One Sunday night I woke up feeling tired and achy, and restless. I hadn't done much all day, so I wondered why I should feel so "all in." I started thinking of the editorial I had read in church news about, "Is There a Devil?"

All at once I felt like a deep, dark shadow had fallen over me. I could hardly think. I struggled hard to get control over my mind and thought, "This must be how Joseph Smith felt when he was praying to know which church is right and was almost overcome by an unseen power."

So I tried to pray and finally got "control" enough to begin the Lord's prayer. When I got to the part that says, "Deliver us from evil," that power left as quickly as it had come. I felt completely free of it and had to marvel that it really happened.

One day our house was full of company. Relatives and their children everywhere. Everyone was so glad to see each other. So happy just to be together.

I remember it was daytime because the children were having so much fun running in and out, laughing, playing games, so carefree and happy just to be together.

It was the same with my sisters and I. We were so busy catching up on the latest news and gossip that time sped by.

"I'm hungry," one of the little ones said, and none of us could believe it was past noon – but we hurried about getting

lunch ready. They brought in loaves of bread and bottles of fruit from their jar, while I spread the cloth on the big table and spread out all our good food, too.

It seemed everyone was helping to get the dishes out of the cupboards, the food from the refrigerator. Food just seemed to appear from everywhere until the table was loaded.

We gathered every available chair, box, box, and bench to circle that big table. Then we rang the dinner bell.

Children seemed to flock in from everywhere until I wondered if they all belonged to us. It was obvious we couldn't all get around that table at once. No way.

"Children," I said after ringing the bell again to quiet them down and get their attention, "First we will have the prayer. Then after that, some of us will eat and some will play a little longer. There is plenty of food. We just have to take turns."

We had the prayer and then I said, "Don't you think we should feed the littlest ones first? They are probably the hungriest, with smaller tummies?"

"They are littler all over," some boy said, but he went outside anyhow with the other big ones.

Soon we had the little ones fed. Some were put down for naps. Others played quietly.

We cleared up dishes, set it over and called in the second group. It was wonderful to be surrounded by so much fun and enthusiasm. They talked so fast, and kept busy eating, too, until I wondered how they could manage. It did settle down to a contented humming sound as one by one they went outside again to play.

Then I suddenly remembered I hadn't seen my daughter Verna. I looked around. Maybe she was tending a baby. She loved babies. Or maybe she was showing off a cartwheel or another trick.

I found her sitting alone and grumpy.

"It was too crowded," she said, "no room for me."

"Sometimes," I told her, "it may seem that way. But there's always food. Your turn will come. I've been waiting, too. Let's go in together."

She looked up smiling, and followed me. She had her own clean plate and cup. There was still plenty of food. She knew that. She just wanted to know someone loved her and wanted her. She didn't mind waiting. I still remember how good the food tasted that day.

Chapter 48: Close Calls

About this time, Kay was baptized. Inez Curtis, my sister in law, was taking her boy Eugene up, so we let Kay go with. They were baptized the same day in front under the Salt Lake Tabernacle.

Rosemary kept growing and was soon as big as other children her age.

After Rosemary's birth I started wondering if I had the right to bring more children into the world. Six were a handful, and there was so much talk, even then, about overpopulation, how we'd get too many people in the world for the food we could raise, etc. I did a lot of thinking about it. I decided it was *quality* not quantity that mattered, and if I raised a family that would help *solve* the worlds problems and add to the happiness and well-being of people, then the world could *use* more people like that to help solve the problems. It depended entirely on what kind of children you were raising.

I couldn't ever imagine the world to have too many "leader type" people. We needed all the "problem-solvers" we could raise. If the world actually did get crowded, then more than ever we needed thoughtful intelligent people to help us. I felt confident that this was the type I was raising. My children would never add to the problems of the world. I'd raise them to be good, law-abiding citizens, and I'd teach them to use the brains God gave them. In this, I sincerely feel my husband and I have succeeded. They are all good children and I am proud of them. Each was a "wanted" child.

By the time we had three or four children, Merrill and I decided to start buying our milk from a dairy. We tried two or three, but it seemed we enjoyed best going to the Willard Pugh Dairy on forty fifth south and thirteenth east. He didn't seem to mind if Merrill took the little ones out of the car to see the cows, and he always gave us good measure for our money. Besides, he was a friendly person. So was his wife. We enjoyed going there with our five, sometimes ten-gallon can.

I remember one very cold day in winter. Merrill had just come home from work and wanted to get the milk before he had supper. He rinsed out the can, which happened to be a thin metal can. He rinsed it with very hot water, put on the lid, and gathering up the children he went out to the car. Suddenly they heard a funny whooshing sound. They looked in the back of the car and couldn't see anything. But when they got to the dairy's driveway, and reached for their can, they found a shrunken up funny thing that certainly wouldn't hold much milk. Merrill showed the can to Mr. Pugh and they decided it must have been

the hot air inside, and the cold outside that caused it. Anyhow he loaned us another can and we did get our milk.

Another time, in warmer weather, Merrill went out for milk and Mr. Pugh was really worried. He said, "I've got to get this barn shingled. I don't have enough time to do it all myself and I can't seem to hire any men. Did you ever do anything like that?"

Merrill told him, "No. I've never shingled anything."

"Well," Willard said, "There's not a lot to it. How about helping?"

So, Merrill decided he could do that much for a good friend, if he'd just give him a few pointers on how to go about it." He felt good that he could help. The barn looked good when it was finished and Merrill had learned a few things. Besides, he paid him. And when he had to raise the price of milk for other customers, he let us have it for less, or the same price we had always paid.

It was another sunny day I remember so well, that a little child's life was in danger. But let me tell you how. Merrill always had a habit, before he started his car, to "back up." He'd always walk around it, to be sure one of the little ones wasn't behind it. I guess he got used to doing this because our little ones were always getting all around his car.

Anyhow, on this afternoon, he carried back the pail of milk, or the can, put it in the back, between the seats, and before he climbed in to drive, he once again started to look behind the car. About then I saw Mr. Pugh come out of the barn and start yelling as he ran towards our car. I couldn't tell what he was saying but he was so excited.

About then, Merrill was picking up a little girl, about two or three years old. She had been squatting right behind our car, by one of the wheels. She didn't even know what the fuss was all about, but those two men did. It would have been so easy for Merrill to back up without seeing her until it was too late. I'll never forget the feeling. It might have happened to one of mine.

I don't know if it was Willard's little girl, or if it was his grandchild. I just know he had tears in his eyes as he took the little girl into his own arms.

Merrill thought a lot of that man. When he saw the picture of the old barn in the paper and read the story he said it gave him a lonesome feeling to know his friend was gone. I know some of the older children will remember going there for milk.

Until, Kay turned eight and said to his Dad, "Dad, if you'd get a cow, I'd keep it milked." He did, too, and we always had our own milk and cream and meat after that. Until there were only three or four of us, and we didn't need a cow any more. So now we buy milk from the store like everyone else. But we did let our neighbor use our pasture, and sometimes they give us milk. We like to see cows out there.

Many times I think of the olden days when the children would all say, "Daddy's going for milk," and we'd all hop into the car. It seemed like such a wonderful adventure, even to me, to escape the house and worries and see other people's homes and garden and flowers, and sometimes to talk to Mrs. Pugh. She was a friendly lady.

I remember how impressed we were by that old rock wall, the big barn and the old farm house. They seemed to be built so

well, as if they'd last forever, and the sound of the cows. But mostly I remember the friendly man and woman that lived there. They were such special people – the kind you always like to remember.

When Corky was about eight years old, we had an awful scare at the old Beck's swimming pool in North Salt Lake.[16]

This was before Delon was born, I guess, and we had the two little girls, too. We didn't know it at the time, but this little

16 This story is first shared by Merrill, and then Leola shared her thoughts about it. Merrill said, "Saturday night was always our main recreation. There wasn't a lot of things we could do, because we never had money to do it. But they had the old Becks swimming pool in North Salt Lake. That was sure a wonderful place, the natural hot springs there—a big long opening, and you had an inside part that was petitioned off with canvas for cold weather, but you could go out there. It was always steamy outside in the cold.

"Well, this one time, we were swimming out there, and the hot water came up to the middle of the pool. There was a big round pipe, and you could go out there. Sometimes I'd get down in there—almost body length. It was hot enough you could hardly stand it.

"I took Nolan out there to show him, and of course Corky wanted to come over, too. He was just playing along the bench that was just below the water—just a foot below the top of the pool along the side for a ways. My wife was over there with him, on that bench and going along the side in the water. I told Nolan to watch Corky, but took Nolan over to show him this pipe thing. All at once I looked back to where they were, and couldn't see Corky.

"So I looked, and I saw him in that water—under the water. He'd somehow stepped off that bench when her back was turned, and he was there down in the water. Well, I dove off of there just as fast as I could. I got over there, and grabbed him and took him out on the bank, and gosh, he was just barely struggling with his arms a little bit. Of course he got a lot of water in him, and I got quite a bit of the water out and finally got him breathing again. Of course we took him home that night, and all that night, he had a rattly chest that sounded bad. He came through it all right, but it was quite an experience."

step was all along the outside of the pool there, and then it dropped off. It just stopped where it went into the deeper water. There was no more bench for anyone to stand on, and neither of us knew this. Naturally, I was more concerned watching the two little girls, and I wasn't thinking much about Corky, because I figured an eight year old should be able to kind of watch out for himself. But I guess he just stepped off of there, and he did it so quietly that I didn't even know what had happened until suddenly I saw Merrill put Nolan down on this cement thing where the water was coming out. He was just sitting there, and I thought, *that's a dumb thing to do.* Merrill went in and just cut through that water like a fish. You never saw anything so fast. And that was the first time I saw Corky. Merrill got him out and took him over his knee on the side there. Water just gushed from his mouth and nose, and boy, I think that was the most scared we ever were. We were sure we'd just lost our little boy.

Neither one of us got any sleep that night... just because. If I wasn't at the foot of his bed, Merrill was, and sometimes we stood there together. Then Merrill said something that really petrified me.

He said, "You know, one of the pigs fell into the buttermilk barrel and he just about drowned. I got him out, and tried to get the milk out of him, and he got around, walked around all day. And then, by golly, he died."

Oh, and then I thought of my little boy. That was the wrong thing to tell me I guess, because I'd hear him rattling that noise in his chest and throat. I knew he still had water in there,

and all I could think was that even if I get him over this, maybe he'll still die.

What I should have realized was that it was water. It wasn't buttermilk. Buttermilk would naturally be a lot more irritating to the lungs. We both did a lot of praying that night at the end of his bed, and worried about him. And oh! I was so thankful when that little feller came out of it. I just felt like I almost lost one of my greatest treasures and suddenly it was given back to me.

If you ever come close to losing a baby or a child, boy, you'll know what I mean.

Chapter 49: Not the Only Ones

I had told my children not to pick leaves if they were shiny, or had three leaves together. But one day, after we had been to the canyon, we came home and Verna didn't feel so good. She was ain about the fifth grade then I think. Anyhow, she started to get a little rash, and her eyes got kind of swelled, and I was was worried. When her father came home, we took her to the doctor.

"Poison Ivy," the doctor said, "Bathe her eyes with cold water, and put Epsom Salts in it. There's not a lot we can do, once they get it."

Then he told me something to always remember, "Poison Ivy has an oil in it's leaves, and that is what causes the trouble. Now, if you can just get hold of some soap and water to wash off the oil, you probably won't have any trouble, but you have to do it right away."

I told this to my children when they were small, and they probably thought I was just being mean when I kept insisting on

them washing with soap and keeping clean, but there really was a reason.

One other thing I remember about this. Verna looked so pitiful, so puffed up in her face and she was crying. A little Japanese girl that lived next door put her arms around Verna and said, "Don't feel bad, You can't help it how you look."

I've never forgotten the compassion in that in that little girl's voice. Japanese people weren't too popular them. It wasn't too long after our war with the Japanese, and I think she knew.

In June 1949, my foot kept hurting me[17]. Gradually it got worse, so I went to the doctor. He checked me over—most everything okay. I told him I turned that foot about a year earlier; fell off a chair and sat on it, and it had never been completely well since. He said he thought that was what was wrong and gave me a prescription (I think they were vitamins...

It didn't bother me too bad unless I stood on it for several hours—washing ironing, or going to town, etc. Then the next day it was awful. I said to Merrill one day, "It's a good thing a person has to think of others, because if they didn't, there are times when they'd just like to curl up and die."

He said, "Well, if you feel like that, go right ahead. There isn't one of us that would want to hold you here if you didn't want to stay."

I had to smile, anyway.

17 The story about Leola's hurting foot is from a letter dating June 1949, and is adjusted from the present tense to past tense to keep the story flowing. The original said, "...gradually it got worse, so I went to the doctor yesterday..."

There are lots of things to live for and enjoy. I was walking in town one day (my foot hurt so) and then I saw a man without legs, and I felt like my heart turned over. I stopped to buy a pencil. He said, "Thank you, sister."

How I wished I could do more. And I didn't see how others could pass by so thoughtlessly. I guess their feet didn't hurt. Maybe it takes a little pain to remind us that we are not the only ones in the world—that others need our help.

Chapter 50: Ellen

About three years after Rosemary was born, another baby was on the way.

Aunt Myrtle came over one night, and she was talking to Merrill, and said, "Isn't it about time your baby was due?"

I said, "Yes, she was due yesterday."

She said, "Well, sometimes they take a little longer. When the apple gets ripe, it will fall."

I didn't think much about that, but then Merrill said, "Yeah, but sometimes the apples get pretty rotten before they fall."

That made me so angry to think he'd compare my sweet little baby to an old rotten apple. I went into the bathroom to keep from saying anything, I was *so mad!* I didn't even want to speak to him. And when I came back, Aunt Myrtle said, "Well, I better go. If you aren't going to have your baby, I might as well go back to Castledale."

She went back to her daughter's house, and Merrill went to bed. I don't think I even spoke to him, I was still upset. I was working around till 9:30 or 10:00. All at once I started to get a peculiar feeling, and I thought, "Well, this couldn't be the night, surely!"

I sat there mending, and making something for the kids. Then I thought, "Maybe I ought to take a bath, just in case."

I started cleaning up and all at once I got real worried. So I jumped out, and went in there and said, "Merrill, it's the night!"

He'd been sound asleep, and said, "Are you sure?"

I said, "I'm sure."

I hurried and got my clothes on, grabbed up my suitcase (which had been packed for a week or two), and I said, "I'll meet you out in the car."

Well, he never heard me say that part, so I waited and waited, and he didn't come out. I thought, "Well, what in the heck's wrong with that man?"

I went back in the house, and he said, "Well, there you are! I've been looking through all the rooms for you!"

I said, "I told you I'd be out in the car!"

He came, and we started out. I didn't even have the Doctor's number written down—I don't know how I could be so dumb! Boy, anybody, always carry your doctor's number. But I didn't, so Merrill had to look it up in the phonebook at the 33rd south Dairy Queen telephone booth on the corner. He looked it up and reached for the phone to dial, and somebody had yanked off the handle part—just cut the cord off! And there was no way you could use that phone.

He came back in the car and told me what happened. He said, "If we can get up to Liberty Park, there's a phone up there."

We started going, and I said, "Don't stop! Just keep going."

He looked at me so surprised. "That bad?"

"Yeah, this is a fast one!"

So we went up the hill and got to the hospital, and I met the nurse and said, "You don't have to sign me in, I've got to get right up there!"

Of course they don't argue with you in that condition.

She said, "Well, he can sign in."

They rushed me upstairs in a wheelchair. Right practically into the delivery room, Ellen was born—ten minutes after we got to the hospital. That was a scary trip!

Merrill wrote down the information they wanted, then he went into the waiting room where they always put the father. He'd just picked up a book and was going to sit down and pass the time for awhile and wait around. But just then the phone rang in the room. He stepped up and answered it, and they said, "Mr. Curtis?"

"Yes?"

"Would you like to see your new daughter?"

He couldn't believe it! That's how quick things can happen.

Ellen was born July 18, 1950.

Up till then, I'd always had plenty of time, but then Ellen's always been an impulsive little rascal, and when she decided it was time to come, she got here in a hurry. She's the one we called our quick baby.

What a joy she was. She was average size so I didn't need to worry quite so much. She looked like a carbon copy of my husband and his people. When I looked at her, I couldn't believe it. I said, "Look at her! She looks just like her dad: her eyes, her eyebrows, the shape of her forehead, and the little slim face. She even had blondish hair. She's just like her dad. That's a pure Curtis kid!"

It was really a thrill to me to have one so much like Merrill. And she's turned out to be a special one, too.

She had her grandmother Curtis's brown eyes. I was so happy to finally have a brown-eyed girl. I'd always wanted one.

We were really happy with our little girl. She was our sunshine girl—such a sweet thing. Always she was cheerful and happy. She loved being the center of the stage and doing things to entertain people and make them smile. Always had an agreeable, easy-going disposition and even if she didn't look like me at all, I could see she had some of my ways. She could make friends so easily. She was like me in that respect... in her ability to be at ease with someone, and to be interested in what the other person was thinking. She enjoyed people, and they liked her. (Still do.) The family loved her so much.

One thing I always enjoyed about my babies—when we'd bring them home from the hospital (every single child!), Merrill did the same thing: he'd bring them in the house, and he'd take them all around, and explain what everything was.

"This is the fridge, and this is the clock. This is where mom and daddy sleeps. This will be your little bed."

He always did that with every little one, talking to them as if they're all grown up. He said, "Well, they've got to know! It's their place and this is the first time they've seen it."

It was really special to me, because I always figured that even if they didn't understand the words, they sure understood the loving and the cuddling up. They all loved their daddy right from the first.

That was an exciting summer with Ellen being born in July. We also had a surprise in August, Merrill had saved enough to pay cash for a brand new car, a 1950 Hudson. For eighteen years he had dreamed of owning a new one, but we had always settled for a used model. What a wonderful drive – how quiet it sounded. How smooth it felt. All nine of us almost held our breath all the way, we were so thrilled.

We also bought me a new full size electric range. I don't know who was happier. I'd cooked with wood and coal for so many years. I couldn't get over the thrill of seeing bread brown exactly right without constant watching. It was "pure beautiful" to me and worked like a charm.

By now we had a gas furnace to heat our house.

After Ellen was born, we thought about moving out where there was more room, and more space. We sold our place in Sandy and also the place on Penny avenue, so we started looking around for another investment. Merrill had always talked about a farm, and I started looking at adds again. I found one for a place in Granger that looked good. It had thirty acres and an old house, barns and outbuildings. We liked it, and spent our savings and started fixing up an old house again, putting in plumbing, heaters,

repairing everything in sight. We put down some linoleum on the kitchen floor to cover the cracks. When the wind blew our floor had waves, up and down about eight inches. The kids though that was so funny. Their father soon put in a good floor. We felt like pioneers out there. It was an experience worth remembering.

Our children took school busses and I did worry about them making connections. They had to walk about a half mile to get to their busses. It was so cold in winter. Lots of snow and wind. Summers were better. The children had a lot to do, but they had fun. I could write a book on it.

We did have two or three things out there that kind of scared us. One time Ellen fell into the irrigation ditch and Delon just got her out. That was a close call. She could have drowned if Delon hadn't been there. I was busy putting up fruit that day and didn't see her. You just can't keep your eye on them every minute it seems like.

Then another time I was really busy working away and all at once I noticed what she was playing with (she was kind of quiet, and playing so still). I looked over at her and she had a bottle of Aspirins, and the bottle was empty.

It was a bottle of two dozen pills, and I knew that it had been half full just before that, and I guess someone had left it around where she could get it, or she climbed up in the cupboard and got it herself.

She was chewing them, and her mouth was so white—so full of them, because she was chewing them. She was only about two years old. I grabbed her and started making her cough it into a wash-dish. I figured the best thing to do was get out as much as I

could as soon as I could. Boy, she hollered and squawked, but she kept spitting it up. I was lucky she'd just eaten before then, so I think most of it came up. Then I made her drink water and made it come up too. I was just so scared! I was shaking all over, because you know they can die if they get too much Aspirin. Then I picked her up and wrapped her up and took her to the neighbors to phone—that was only about four blocks away. We were that far away from the nearest neighbor. I called and talked to my doctor. He said, "Well, you did the best thing you could. All we would have done was pumped her stomach and hoped she didn't get too much. It goes into the bloodstream in the first few minutes."

So that was a really scary thing. That *should* have really taught me a lesson, but it didn't. Right after that—it was just a few days—I was cleaning out my cupboards and I saw this bottle that had, oh, a tablespoon or so of fly spray, and it was five percent DDT. I remember reading that. I thought, "Why am I saving this little dab of fly spray? There won't be flies for a long time."

I was just going to dump it down the sink, and thought, "Well, I could take it and dump it out around the outhouse or something."

I set it on the table for just a minute, and that was right about the time Merrill came home from work.

Well, it's always been our habit when he first comes from work, we'd talk for two or three minutes and kind of get the news of the day from each other. We walked into the other room from the other kids who were always noisy. All at once I heard this coughing noise, and I knew—

I jumped and ran, and she had just downed the last drop of it. How she could swallow that stuff I don't know, but kids are like that! I yelled, "Merrill, she took the fly spray!"

He ran out and got the car started, and I grabbed the washdish and started making her urp it up again. Fortunately, again she had just had supper, because a lot of times I gave the children their supper first, because I never knew when Merrill would come home—it would just depend when he got his load delivered. So we rushed her to the hospital, and I guess they pumped her stomach, too.

A man came out and talked to me. I'd taken along a sample to show what it was and everything. He said, "Well, I think she's going to be all right, but I want you to watch her close for twenty four hours. If she has any more symptoms, rush her right back in."

So I went home, and you know who didn't sleep that night? I just stood over that child, I was so scared. She just kept acting so funny—her eyes would roll way back, and every once in a while her whole body would just quiver and shake. I read on the directions of the spray that it paralyzed the flies, that's what the DDT did. Oh, you can imagine what a horrible night that was!

By the time the twenty four hours were over, she was pretty normal by the next evening. Once again I really felt thankful that her life had been preserved, and believe me, I sure watched from then on whenever any bottles were around or anything the children could get into. This is really something anybody with children should keep in mind.

I always felt like Ellen had a special guardian angel.

We decided to buy a tractor and Corky (only 13) was in his glory plowing up fields. Merrill gave him about 15 cents an hour, I think, for spending money if he'd do the work. He also milked the cows with Patsy's help.

Chapter 51: Debe

Nolan said he would rather work at the brick yard and help pay for the tractor.

When we were out in Granger, Debra Ann (We've always called her Debe) came to join our clan on Feb 24, 1953. She was our little Granger baby—of course she was technically born in Salt Lake City, but we lived in Granger when she was born.

It was wonderful to look into her little round face, a lot of black hair, and see she looked a little like her Mom. It was always so fascinating to see a resemblance and how each child was so different and yet alike... a "Curtis." And we loved them all.

She was such a special little baby, too. I was so happy all that winter, waiting for her, because she was born the first part of the year. It was really a happy time for all of us—except when it came right down to the last three or four weeks before she was to be born. I started having troubles, and everyday I'd think maybe I was going to go to the hospital. And it was a technical thing, because we didn't have a telephone, and there was no way we

could get one. We'd applied for one, but we were just too far out from the other houses. We just couldn't get—you had to sign up and wait your turn to finally get one. Well, we didn't have any, and it was four blocks to the nearest neighbor that had a telephone.

When Merrill went to work, he'd be gone a long time, all day. There was no way to call or see how I was. So every morning when he'd leave, we'd both kind of worry, wondering how things would be, and I'd always tell him I was okay. Usually I was. Sometimes I think psychology, and being worried, makes your body act up anyhow. But the last week I said, "I just don't dare be here alone, so you children will have to each take turns being home with me."

That didn't go over well with any of them, because they all enjoyed school work—at least they wanted to keep up with their classes. But I figured if they missed a day once a week or so, that wouldn't hurt them, and anyway, I'd soon get the baby.

So one day Verna would stay home, then the next day Patsy would stay. This is how it went.

The time went by, and every time as soon as the school bus was gone (they had to catch the school bus), I'd feel fine again!

Time went on. The day finally came, and Merrill was home that day. Oh, was I glad that he was there! He took me to the hospital, and we had our sweet little girl.

Oh, we loved that little thing! I brought her home, and I think that was one of the happiest days of my life. All the children were so glad to see her, they thought she was so special. We called

her the eighth wonder of the world, because she was our eighth child.

We had seen a movie called, Broken Arrow, and it had an Indian girl in it that was played by Debra Paget, and I thought this was such a pretty Indian girl, and I kind of liked that name. So did Merrill. So we finally decided on that one, but for a long time after Merrill would call her his little Navaho or his little Indian. That was kind of a private joke between us. She had good brown skin and pretty brown eyes, so she looked a little Navaho.

One morning Ellen was talking to Debby. She said, "Debe, I remember you when you were up in Heaven." She hesitated a minute and went on, "That was down to the other place before you were born. I was a baby then, and they thought Ellen was such a pretty name that they gave it to me."

Debe was cheerful as could be. She had quite decided ideas about what she wanted and what she didn't—she wasn't easily pushed around.

I remember she was a little bit jealous for her daddy. She'd get up and leave if she couldn't have him all to herself.

While we were out there, Nolan graduated from seminary and high school. My mother and dad came up to see him, and mother had to stay in bed. A neighbor across the street came over. I think that your cows have gone down 21st South!"

I said, "It couldn't be our cows. Ours are out in the pasture."

"Well, sure looked like it. I think it'd pay to check on them."

So I went out and looked, and I came back, saying, "Gosh, there's not a cow out in the pasture!"

We had about fifteen or twenty of them. That was the biggest heard we had. Mom said, "Just lay the baby right here by me, and I'll watch her, and dad, you go see if you can help her."

Well, my poor Dad. He didn't know anything about cows, and how to handle them, and I didn't know much either. But we did have a good dog out there, old Sarge.

We went down 21st South. We lived on 27th—then they'd gone another block, and this was the main highway where the guys went out to work out in Magna and the highway to Tooele, and there's a lot of cars, and a lot of traffic. This was in the afternoon before the workers got off work, so that helped a little, but still, I looked and I could see them down the road, and they were just going right down the road. I said to Dad, "Well, we've got to get up there and get them turned around some way."

So about then, they went over in the shade on the side there. I figured they stopped to graze a little. So we got up and around them, and sent the dog, myself, and dad. We managed to get them back.

That was sure some experience! My baby only about two or three weeks old. I'll always remember that. Mother got along fine with her.

When Debe was a little bit older, the bishop came over to see us one night, and he said he'd been thinking about calling Nolan on a mission. I don't know why, but this kind of surprised us. We hadn't even been thinking of this. Here we were going along, everything so smooth—Nolan had been working at the

brick yard and giving his dad money every month, and Merrill had paid this money on the tractor. Now all at once we'd lose that money, plus we'd still have to dig up money for his mission. We already had eight children, so we had to give that a little bit of thought.

We were always glad that we decided to let him go. He was called to go to New Zealand. This was quite a time for us. It was the first time any of our children had left home.

He was going for two and a half years.

Nolan was especially fond of little Debe and when his mission call came, I remember how he picked her up and loved her. She was only eighteen months old when he left. He had tears in his eyes at the thought of leaving her. He said, "When I come back she'll be all over this cuteness. She'll be three or four years old. She'll change so much in that time..." She did. But when he did come back, Nolan had a sister named Lealeth, about like Debe had been, so there were two to love and he always loved both, so much.

That was the time I learned to drive.

Nolan had built a car (from the frame out) and it was his pride and joy. When he left for his mission he said to me, "I know you'll miss me, so when you do, just hop in that car, try driving it, and you'll be less lonesome," and he gave me the key.

I was scared of driving for a long time, but I learned to drive it and had my license while he was gone. It really is good therapy. When you need to get your mind on something else, somehow it eases the tension. A person who is busy with something interesting to do can't stay too lonely. Korky learned at

the same time and got his license just a little ahead of me. Merrill bought a second car so Kay and I could get around while he was at work.

What a touching time it was for all of us to let our boy go. Imagine all that far away! Thousands of miles, I guess!

The train pulled out, and I said, "I feel like it took a hunk of my heart with it!"

Merrill said, "Well, what do you think about me?" The tears were streaming down his cheeks.

But we always felt that was a good investment, because he surely came back a man. He had a good experience there, and we got his letters. It was wonderful to get his letters—we really looked forward to them.

It was hard for us to lose Nolan's help. I then put out money to keep him there—but we let him go. This made a big change in our lives. For one thing, we started attending church regularly. They asked me to be a Sunday School teacher of 8 year old children. It was in October, about the first Sunday after Nolan left. He sailed October 12 on Columbus day. The lesson I had to give included Jesus "stilling" the storm. It really impressed me.

I'll never forget how glad I was to get that first letter. I turned it over and over and was so happy I didn't care what it said inside. He was good to write every week or ten days at most.

ESP

Sometimes I was given glimpses, as I call them, or premonitions that prepare me for what is ahead. I could sometimes see things *before* they happen. It is always something

special for me or for my family. I think Heavenly Father sometimes gives this "gift" to some of us who try very hard to please him. My mom had the same gift.

Please don't think this is any bragging or boasting on my part. I don't understand it any more than you do, I've told Merrill it is similar to the feeling of "tuning in" on a radio station. Sometimes conditions are just right. Other times no reception. I don't always like to tell people about these experiences, because some get spooked or they think I can turn it on any time, and I can't.

I had lots of ESP experiences while Nolan was on his mission and many times knew what he was doing while he was away. I've had "glimpses into the future" of every child. They are not easily written about...

I don't always like to tell people about these experiences, because some get spooked or they think I can turn it on any time, and I can't.

One time we didn't hear for two weeks and I was so worried. That night I dreamed I saw him on an island with other young men – every detail was clear. A few days later he wrote saying they'd gone to a place exactly like I'd dreamed.

Another time it happened when I was worried and "saw" him attending a party for a young girl. Later, he told me he'd been at a party that day. I wrote back telling him how I had dreamed it with perfect detail and said I'd like a picture of this girl and asked me to choose. It was easy and correct. Later, this girl went to BYU and came to see me. I knew her before she told me

her name. I could tell several other incidents of ESP (extra sensory perception) they call it. But these were the clearest and answers to prayers.

He was a good missionary and we were proud of him.

I remember before he went away he was kind of easy going, and people could impose on him a little bit. He'd always go out of his way to do things for them, and he didn't think he needed the time or money for himself. He was kind of a pushover in a lot of ways, and it kind of worried me. When he came back, boy, he had quite a definite mind of his own. He was real polite about it, but nobody was pushing *him* around!

Chapter 52: Lele

While living in Granger, it was always kind of hard to get out. Everywhere you went, you had to have the car. If you went to church, if you went to school, you had to have a car—everywhere.

I was expecting Lealeth, and didn't enjoy the prospect of being out there in Granger with another baby, and we still didn't have a telephone. You just couldn't get them out there. I remember before she was born, we'd gone our three years and didn't have a baby. We figured we'd had all we were going to get.

Two or three neighbors were having babies, and Merrill was getting a little jealous. I didn't tell him for three or four months, and I decided I really ought to tell him. So one day he said, "Well, how come everyone around here's getting babies and we aren't?"

I said, "Honey, we've got one ordered."

He said, "I don't know anything about it."

I said, "We're going to have one."

That was the only baby I ever kept secret, but he was thrilled to death.

We had been renting out our place on fifth east but we hadn't been too happy with our renters. They had not been too dependable, and when the last one moved out without telling us, we went back to find broken windows, doors, light fixtures, and an awful mess. I really felt bad, and Merrill said, "They can't treat our home that way—we're moving back."

I was so happy. At first the children didn't want to move back. They loved the farms. Soon, they got used to it and it was nice for them to ride town busses and walk to school and church. It was closer to Merrill's work. We were expecting our ninth child and I hated to be alone, so far from help again, like the last time. I still remember how excited the small ones were because warm air blew out of the register, and there weren't any big old stoves that could burn you.

It was so wonderful to come home. There was no coal to carry in and it was closer to the schools than they *had* been walking to the bus line.

The children couldn't believe it when they felt warm air coming out of the register. They kept saying, "Mom! Come and feel it! Come feel what it's like!"

I was especially glad my little Rosemary didn't have as far to go. I'd worried about her so much. I'd even bought her a bright red coat so the other drivers on the road would see her, but every time it grieved me until I saw the orange bus pick her up. I just couldn't have any peace until it came.

This one morning, it was awfully cold, the wind was a blowing, and she walked over as far as far as the mailbox, then she turned around and came back. I scolded her a little, saying, "Don't you know? You've *got* to go, or you'll never learn to read and write."

She said, "But Mommy, it was *so cold!*" and she started to cry.

So I said it's all right, that she could stay home this time, "But tomorrow I expect you to go!"

I don't think she ever turned back again—just that once.

Lealeth was born January 9, 1956. How we all loved her. She was a loving child and all her big sisters took turns tending her. Her eyes were blue. She had reddish blond hair and was interested in everything around her.

She was sure a fun little joy.

Chapter 53: Church Service

Right after we moved back, I got into primary work, and Dad got into what they called Senior Aaronic Priesthood.

They called me to work in the Stake Sunday School, but after a while I asked to be released. It was hard getting my own family to church if I had to go to another ward that morning.

I was in primary about fourteen years. At first I was a teacher and taught the eight year olds. I'd practice my lessons a lot on Lealeth.

Lealeth always wanted to have a little bother or sister, because a lot of her friends had little brothers or sisters, especially in primary. She kept hounding me how she wanted a little brother.

I said, "Lealeth, sometimes you've got as many as you can get!"

She said, "Well, I think you could have at least one."

She just kept on, and finally when we did find out we were going to have one, I told her, and oh, she was overjoyed! She

thought this was all her own idea. I thought, "Well, I've been in primary a couple or three years now, it's time to get out."

So I went and talked to my president about it, and told her I hadn't been feeling to well, and that I'd like to get out.

She said, "What's the matter Leola, are you expecting a baby?"

I said, "Yeah, I am."

"Well," she said, "join the crowd! There's five of us blossoming out. That's no alibi. You can't get out of primary for that!"

So I stayed there until just a little while before the baby was born. Then I went right back in again when the baby was a couple weeks old. I found out by then they *really* needed somebody. Since he had big sisters that could watch him that little while I was gone, I felt like he was okay.

One time we had a primary lesson on saying thank you, and of course it's made kind of simple for the little children. I told them how important it was to reach out and thank everybody, not just somebody special, but everybody that does something for them. I said it could be real nice right now if you boys and girls were to take out your pencils and paper (and I handed some out), and we'll write a letter to your mommy and daddy to tell them how much we appreciate what they are doing for us.

These were little seven year olds, so they couldn't print real well, and I wrote a few words on the board they could put down, or they could put down their own ideas if they wanted to. Most of them wrote letters—some of them didn't, they couldn't be bothered, but one little girl copied it down just real nice, and

brought it up to show me. I thought she'd taken a little longer, because she'd turned it over and was writing on the other side of her page.

I was helping some of the other children with theirs, and she was one of the last ones to come up and show me. After I read the letter to her mother and father (it was really cute), then she turned it over and said, "Teacher I want *you* to read this."

I turned it over, and it said, "Dear teacher, I love you very very very (about eight verys) much." And she signed her name.

I thought that was so cute! These are the things that keep you teaching, aren't they?

One little boy that I had quite a bit of trouble with brought a treat for the class. I let them have their gum, or peanuts or candy or whatever if they have enough to treat all of us. But if they don't have enough to go around, I'd take care of it for them until class was over. Well, he had a package of little chocolate candy things and passed them around, and another package with some sunflower seeds (you know how children love those), and he handed them out one at a time, all around.

I said, "Okay, now it's time to take your seat so we can have class."

But he wanted to come up to the front and hold my hand, and he dumped the rest of the package in my hand, and said, "That's for you, because I like you!"

That made me feel kind of good. I put them in my purse.

These are the kind of things that make life worth living, and a lot of times we're just so busy with all the things we have to

do that we just don't take time to say, "I love you," or, "Thank you for doing this, I appreciate it."

After I was a teacher for several years, they asked me if I would like to be a counselor. And then from a counselor, I was made president.

I was a president for about a year and a half until we got a new bishop, and he decided he wanted to reorganize everybody, so he did.

They asked me if I'd work in Relief Society, and I was Relief Society secretary for a while. Then later I was put in as supervisor over the visiting teachers. So that's what I did with church.

There's no doubt at all in my mind. The gospel is true.

How does it feel to be filled with the Holy Ghost? It's hard to describe, but I don't know any other way to explain the joy that fills your whole being, and you have such a feeling that God *is* in His heaven. You know you are His child, and He is pleased with you and what you are doing at that very moment. The feeling of well being is so wonderful, you long to keep it forever, and you have the assurance this *is* possible, and you will never walk alone as long as you strive to do what's right.

But there are times when you feel so filled. When were some of those times? The choicest was the day I was married in the temple. I knew the Lord approved of what had been accomplished that day. Never do I expect to feel a deeper joy!

Each time a new baby joined the two of us, I also felt the joy. Sometimes when I first realized I was with child, I'd be so filled with happiness I'd have to drop to my knees and thank God

that the miracle would happen once more. And many times I have heard the words, "Blessed art thou."

One time I was teaching a primary class. There are always one or two children you seem to have trouble with. You love them so, but they are a challenge. I'd been so worried about that lesson. I'd studied so hard and I'd almost hoped my "challenges" wouldn't be there that day.

But they were.

Mud on their shoes, showing each other, making bright remarks and in general acting up. I told the Lord (silently) that I really needed His help that day. I'm not sure what the lesson was about or what I said. I only know I was not alone that day. I took the children into my confidence. I said, "Boys and girls, I want you to know something. There are angels in this room. I cannot see them, but I can feel their presence."

You could have heard a pin drop, it was so quiet. The children believed me, and I'm sure it was true. The time spent teaching that day was so special I'll never forget it, nor the way the children were so reverent, and how quietly they left when it was over. I knew I'd had the special help I'd needed, and I know the children felt the Spirit, too.

One day in the temple, it was suddenly as if a special blessing had been poured over me, and the joy was so great I suggested to my husband that we go through again, and he agreed. I just didn't want to leave. One of the ladies said to me, "We don't have much chance to get acquainted in the temple, but I want you to know I have enjoyed being with you. You have such a sweet spirit."

I thanked her, and told her, "You can always tell those who loved the Lord, and I've enjoyed being near you, too."

We each knew, or felt that Holy Spirit. No more words were necessary.

When I came home, I heard the phone ring, and Brother Romero wondered if we'd have the youth fireside in our home on Sunday. I couldn't have said no. I told him our living room was small, but they were welcome to use it. The next day all four of us were busy getting our house in order, and I planned what we would eat. Young folk like goodies.

It was special. The speaker was exceptionally good—I'll never forget his sincerity and the feeling of being on hallowed ground. I knew angels had witnessed or heard what went on. Afterward I asked them to come into the kitchen to pick up the punch and cookies. They all seemed so happy. I was filled with the wonder of it all—that certain feeling of joy and accomplishment that I knew I couldn't sleep. So we sat and watched the news on TV and honestly didn't see or hear it, but it did relax me and I could sleep.

There *is* such a thing as the Spirit of the Lord, or the feeling of approval, or the companionship of the Holy Ghost. It *is* a very real experience. Once you have known the feeling, you want it to continue. It's so hard to explain. It's like being fed when you were hungry—or like coming into a warm room out of the cold, or a cool room after the heat of day in summer. And yet it is more than any of these. Sometimes it is like seeing a dear familiar face, and you want to say, "I know you. You are here at last."

I have the feeling that if I were suddenly face with a great sorrow, I could survive and overcome my grief, by turning to this comforter. I know he is there to help me and I do not walk alone.

Maybe *this* is the fruit spoken of in Lehi's dream. Those who accept the idea do share something special. Those who are afraid to find out by tasting, never know the joy they are missing. How can you miss a taste you have never known?

But as surely as you remember the tastes of apples, oranges, bananas—just as surely you will remember the joy of feeling the Spirit of the Lord once you have known it.

Blessed is the person who cherishes the gift. How I wish I could hand it to each one like a Christmas present. But each one must choose if he will seek the gift. And once he has made that decision he must persevere, and not waver.

It is real. It is beyond the price in value. You would gladly give up everything you own just to keep it. I do not say these things lightly. I would not dare to try to deceive you. Consider the type of person I am. I do have faults. I am not perfect, but have I ever tried to mislead you? Haven't I always wanted to share with each of you all that I found to be good, worthy, uplifting? Haven't I pointed out to you the beauties of nature, the wonders of creation, the joys of accomplishing worthwhile endeavors? Then if I found a real treasure, wouldn't I want to share it with those I love most? *You* know the answer to that question. *You* know I love you dearly. I would gladly have given my life if I'd been called on to make such a sacrifice. Instead, I have live it, for you.

Chapter 54: Always Something Happening

Nolan came home from his mission, just before mother's day. The lilacs were in bloom. What a happy time—but he was only home exactly two weeks, and then he was in the army.

"Well mom," he said, "I hate to just go again as soon as I get back, but I also don't want to get used to being home and maybe find a girlfriend and *then* have to go into the army."

I could see his point, but it was really hard to let him go so quick, because he'd been gone two and a half years, and this was just the time when Kay was graduating high-school, and the girls were in seminary, and one was graduating. Anyway, I did get a picture of them all before he left.

He went down to report like they had to, within five days after they came from their mission. He asked what his chances were on the draft, and they said he would probably be called up in the next draft, because he'd been deferred on account of his mission. So he also asked about the opportunity for an education,

because we didn't have any money to send him to school, and he really wanted to go to a school of electronics. So he did. He got information and found out if he got his basic training right away, then he could get right into electronics school like he wanted. So he came home and broke the news.

In a way it was best before we all got used to having him around—but he couldn't even get away to see his brother Kay graduate from High School or Verna from Seminary or Patsy from Jr. High. Life is like that.

That spring, 1960, Patsy and Gayle graduated from high school. Patsy and Verna both went to work at the Genealogical building. Verna was called to a stake mission.

There was always something happening in our family. One day I let the paper boy in. He's a nice young fellow. I went out back to get dues from Merrill. While I was gone, Pat got a sudden musical streak—picked up her broom and pretended it was a guitar; started strumming and singing, "My heart was Crying." And as she walked into the front room strumming on broom and singing—there was Alfred Swygart.

My how he tried to keep from smiling as I came back with the dues. Reminded me of the time Kay come home and as he came from the kitchen to front room he was singing, "Oh Mama Ceeto" —and more Spanish and there I was talking to a friend. Both times I got the impression our friends liked the fun in our family.[18]

18 In a letter dated 2 January 1961, Leola shares a little tidbit that reflects the same household fun. In a letter to her parents, she ends it by saying:

Soon after this there was a "Top Pop" contest to choose the best Dad for a Father's Day story in the Deseret News. Five of our children wrote letters nominating their Dad and he was Top Pop of the year and we had our picture taken and put in the paper. We were all pretty happy and knew he well deserved it.

One night I had a dream about Nolan. I dreamed he was teaching school, and there were a lot of army men in the class. I couldn't figure it out, so I wrote and asked him about it. Of all things, it was really true. He was teaching them some of the electronics he had learned in school, and the army gave him permission and wanted him to do it.

After he came from that, he learned more about electronics and he was teaching school and went to university.

We decided to build an upstairs in our house. We had sold the farm and tractor to Fred Gessel. We had room for 5 nice bedrooms and a hall. The children were so happy.

Kay was courting a girlfriend, Gayle Millet, a pretty blue eyed dark haired girl. We all liked her so much. They had been going together through the summer and fall, and they planned on being married in the spring, as soon as school was out and she graduated. But they decided to jump the date and get married in

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"Gee, everyone keeps talking to me and asking me questions til I can't think straight. It seems mornings are the best time to write. Lily has a toothache, Nolan playing with the cat, Ellen giggling, Debbie tapping out a tune on the chair legs, Verna practicing accordion, Pat and Rose finishing up the supper dishes—singing as they work, 'We wish you a happy New year,' and something about, 'we won't go until we get some.'

"Sterling talking away to his Dad (who mostly grunts). It seems I can't concentrate for all the excitement around here. Anyhow it's a happy noise, but I give up. I'll finish this letter later."

December. Just before Sterling was born, on Dec 11, 1959, Kay eloped with Gayle—only they had to come back to get their parents permission as they were too young. I sure wanted to see my child married, but I didn't dare take that long ride to Evanston, Wyoming. Maybe someday they will go to the temple, and then I'll be there. One thing for sure, he couldn't have found a sweeter girl. She was dearly loved in our family, and still is. They've both been sorry about eloping. They hadn't realized they'd hurt us. They just wanted to be together... and I am so glad they loved each other that much.

Real love is a rare thing and should be treasured. It's so easy to take each other for granted after a few years, to see the faults in the other person. Sometimes we have to relive the time in our memories of how wonderful it was when we first loved each other, and try a little harder to stay sweethearts. A marriage is a lot like a garden. It won't tend itself.

In the mean-time, Kay had joined the national guard and this thing had come up about Cuba, and he was getting shipped out, so he was shipped the night of my mother's funeral—and he couldn't even go to his own grandmother's funeral. He felt really bad about that. Well, we were in Provo, and after the burial, I told my dad I wanted to go back to Salt Lake to see if we could see Kay at the train before he went, because I hated to see Gayle go there with just her little baby. Anyway, how did I know I'd ever really see him again? This was a really scary situation.

Chapter 55: Duce

Lealeth was three years old. Our last five children were nine years apart but we didn't have any baby. Merrill was half joking one day saying it was funny all the neighbors were getting babies and it was too bad we couldn't. I laughed and told him if he'd be patient another six or seven months we'd have one, too.

I'll never forget how happy we both were—all the children were excited about the possibility.

Sterling was born Feb. 5, 1960. Oh, the excitement to learn we had another boy. He is my only blue-eyed boy, and the first boy since Delon, and Delon was 15 years old. Everyone was so excited.

Sterling looked like my father, and for the first time I had a blue-eyed boy. All of us were so excited about him.

When Sterling was just a little baby, and we brought him home from the hospital, oh, Lele was so happy to see him! She came running in (she was about four years old then), and she was

just so thrilled with him, but she said, "Mom! What's wrong with his little feet?"

I said, "What do you mean?"

"They're all black!"

I recognized that he had that ink on them from making footprints for identifying.

She was quite worried because her little brother had black feet.

She sure thought he was adorable. She was in love with him, and was so good to him. I don't thing there was a cross word between them for at least two or three years. She'd always run to wait on him, and she thought that was *her* baby. She was like his little mama.

She'd say, "I have him! I want him!"

She wanted to take him to bed with her. She wanted to do everything with him. That was *her* baby! Hadn't she coaxed and coaxed for just one more baby? Sometimes I wonder if she knew there was one more up there waiting when she came.

She loved him so much. I never saw her be cross with him even once before they reached their teens, and then it was always quickly settled. Lealeth came to sit on my lap that day I came from the hospital. She said, "I'm so glad you came home to hold me."

I said, "Well, didn't your sisters hold you?"

"Yes," she said, "but they are hard and boney. They aren't soft and fat like you."

Oh, well. It's nice to be wanted.

When Lele went to school the first day, I had to take her little brother along, and she didn't want to stay. She wanted to come back home, so I sat in class with her, and there was another one, Jan VanDenBerghe and her mother, and no way would those two little ones let us leave until recess came.

The teacher told us it was all right if we sat there. So we sat until recess, and by then they had warmed up a little bit. The teacher said, "Well, I think you mothers can go home now. I think they'll be all right."

So we went out and felt kind of teary that they let us go. We got out on the parking lot to get to our cars, and I said to Lila, "I don't know what's the matter with that kid. I had eight others, and none of them bawled and wanted me to stay at school."

She said something to me that I've always thought about. She said, "Well, yes, but don't you think it's kind of nice that they like us that much?"

That put a whole new light on it. I thought, "That is kind of nice."

There are some children that are so busy with their friends, and running of to play that they couldn't care less about mom. But this has been true all through her life. Lealeth has been quite a one to look after her mom. Not that she worries, but she was always concerned, and it's been a comfort to me. Debe's been this way too—well, all of them were in their times. I guess I just noticed it most because she was the youngest of the girls.

Sterling was just a fine little boy. You couldn't ask for a better kid than he was. We enjoyed him so much!

He was our little genius. Everybody told him that. I think he learned a lot from his brothers. He learned a lot from Delon and Nolan, and he read just about every book in the library on electric things.

I tried really hard not to spoil him, because a lot of people do spoil their last one, and I think he turned out real good. We're real proud of him.

Chapter 56: Mother's Last Days

Our mother went to California for special treatment at the Loma Linda hospital. She had arthritis, the crippling kind and had been in bed for years. Ruby and Warren went down there to see them. On the way back, they saw one of the flashes from the bombs they were dropping in Nevada. I remember Ruby saying to me, “Even when you held up your hand in front of your eyes, you could still see the red blood and bones of your hand, the light was so bright.”

No one knew then, that awful danger of radiation. I honestly believe that is why my sister got leukemia. There's no proof, but it was right after's that she started feeling so tired.

Her illness was tragic. It broke a lot of hearts. One day she was here with her little ones. I said, “Why don't you children go out to play."

They just didn't seem to want to leave her, but finally went, and Ruby said to me, “I can't send them away. It's just like they

knew," and I knew that Ruby knew her time was limited. She said, "They are still so young."

And I just had to go out of the room.

She lived about a year after that. She had to go to the hospital every month to get a blood transfusion. She'd feel pretty good for a few days, but by the end of the month she had to go back again. Then that last time, she didn't come out.

I remember how I grieved for her little nine-year-old boy. I figured the girls had each other, but he was the only little boy. I loved all of them so much.

They lived with their dad for three years.

When my sister passed away, she left four children, and her husband wasn't very well either.

Then one night he called me. It was in the night. He called us down and asked us if we would take his children. If I would consent to be the guardian of his children, then if anything happened to him (he had to go in to the hospital for an operation, and he was so worried he might not come out alive), he wanted to know if I would take his children. He had emphysema. He was retired and took care of them the best he could.

That was quite a decision, because we already had a houseful, and the only two we had married were Nolan and Kay at that time. So with eight of ours and three of there's, that would be eleven, and Merrill and I would be thirteen!

Three years after Ruby died, Warren passed away.

So the three teenage Dally children came to live with us. We had the experience alright. Thirteen of us around the table,

and a lot of it was really good. Ruby would have done the same for me. We loved each other, and we loved each other's children.

We added a second bathroom and made our kitchen bigger.

At first, Lorraine, the older one, sixteen, went to live with her sister, Catherine, so I just had Roland and Bernice (12 and 14), and Roland was sure a nice little boy. He wanted to be a deacon, and he got quite impatient with the bishop because he wouldn't make him a deacon right away.

The bishop said, "We have to wait until your recommend comes, so we have a record of you in our ward."

So finally he got that experience.

Also Bernice, she was such a sweet girl. She was fourteen at that time, and needed her mother so badly. I hope I helped her out a little bet. The other girls were so good to help her and be with her. I just can't forget how good my children were to accept these as their own sisters and brothers—they just took them over and they had a lot of fun playing. We have our family night. Sometimes I have to cut it down from an hour to a half an hour because they'd be so busy with their homework. Every once in a while we'd con Merrill into taking us to a show and calling it our family night, and you know, we even went to see the Beatles once with them? *A Hard Days Night, and I've been working like a dog.* I can still hear that song! But you know, it was fun. We grew young together. We had five teenagers at one time, and really had a lot of fun. So much enthusiasm and so much going on all the time.

One time they wanted to make root beer. We'd made it before, but this one night they decided they wanted some and

Roland and Lela came to me and said, "Can't we please make some root beer?"

I said, "I was just going to go to the store, and I don't want my kitchen all messed up."

They said, "We'll clean it up!"

I thought, "I bet you will," but I said, "Well, not tonight. Maybe later."

I was going somewhere and then going somewhere with Dad—probably one of his calls to visit the inactive members. We'd usually do this two or three nights a week. Well, I told them I'd rather they didn't, and away I went.

They made it anyhow, and they cleaned up their mess—they cleaned it so thoroughly, and I never had the slightest suspicion they'd ever made it, because there was no trace. Then one day Roland came downstairs and said, "Oh, aunt Leola, I've got to tell you something."

I said, "What's that?"

"Well," he said, "we went and made the root beer anyway, and now the bottles are starting to pop!" because the yeast got too strong, and it would break the bottles when they got so far along.

I said, "Well, bring it down, we'll put it in the fridge to cool it off so it will be okay."

Boy I'll never forget how we carried those bottles down—all of us afraid the bottles were going to explode while we were carrying them. But we got them in the fridge, and got them cooled, and had us a big party that night with our root beer, and for two or three more days.

We had lots of good times like that.

About a year after my sister passed away, my mother died. The doctor figured she had cancer. She'd been an invalid for years, so it was really a blessing that she could go. And while I missed her a lot, there was no way I would have tried to get her back, because it was just so good to see her have relief from the pain. Mom died 6 October 1961[19]. I knew the day would come, and I thought it would be an awful lonely feeling.

Well, it was in a way, but in another way it is a thankful feeling that I still had one parent left. It was really hard to leave Dad right after the funeral. I couldn't make up my mind until the last minute. I wanted so much to stay a little longer with all of them, but still I wanted to let my boy, Kay, who was leaving with the military, know that I loved him. So we came back. We made good time until we hit Murray, and from there it was real traffic. We were in front of the depot by 5:40pm, and we knew he had to be on the train by 5:50.

We couldn't find parking. I never saw so many cars. Merrill said, "I'll let you off and at least you can see him and I'll try to get a parking."

Then we saw the crowd—500 soldiers all looking alike. I thought, *I'll never find him in time!*

But just as I went inside the door, Gayles mother saw me and called. She said, "Kay will come back here. He told me to

19 This very first sentence was added. The account is taken from a letter from Leola to her dad, dated, 11 Oct 1961, with the first-person *you* instead of *he*, and a few things changed from present to past tense for literary flow, but otherwise it's straight from the letter..

watch for you and hold you here. He is looking around for you but he will be back."

What a wonderful idea. I doubt if I ever could have found him in time, and I'll never forget how glad he was when he came back and we were there waiting. Yes, Merrill got a parking and got back about the time Kay came back. We only had three or four minutes to talk before the loud speaker started calling all the men to the train. We talked as we went toward the train.

Nolan just barely made it—just in time to shake hands and wish him luck and in time to kiss his sisters goodbye.

One thing that really got me is the way Kay held onto that baby until the very last minute. One soldier come along and said, "What are you hanging onto that kid so hard for? You can't take him with you."

Kay just said, "Oh, yeah?"

I thought to myself how often we "carry something with us," even if no one else can see it. We carry the love of the one who is not there. We carry a beautiful memory and we really have something so precious words can't describe. Maybe it is the memory of shared love, or maybe it is the home of a joyful reunion.

Whatever it is, we are better persons because of it. And even if there is sadness when they leave, still there is a comfort that we did have them, and we will have them again. I felt that way about Mom and also Kay. Our lives were better because of them, and we will see them again.

I guess we all try to hang on to the last minute—even if we can't keep them. We think, "If I just had one more minute's talk..."

Maybe we all kind of wish they could tell us what it is like, if they're leaving this world and going into the next world.

It's just a matter of loving the rest of the people are left. Loving them just a little bit more if you can, and not hurting too much for the ones that we lose. I just like to pretend they've gone off on a trip somewhere and maybe we'll see them later on. I just try to put it out of my mind.

By the time you get old, you sure lose a lot of relatives and friends, and people that are dear to you.

Nobody can ever convince me anything but what they're still alive, but just out of their body and we can't see them any more. But someday we will. I feel just as sure of that as I feel of the morning coming—even more sure.

Kay was so happy when he looked around and said, "The whole family turning out to see me off."

I couldn't help but think that Mom must have felt the same way. It was a beautiful funeral. I have never been to a better one or more peaceful. Everything seemed so "just right," and it did comfort me. It seemed like Mom was there.

Chapter 57: The Growing Family

We enjoyed a Yellowstone trip in 1962. Our trip was about perfect except for one thing, and maybe even that was a good experience for me—but to explain: I wanted a picture of the falls, and had to hike down a trail to get a better view, about 1½ miles. Merrill said he would go, and I said I would wait in the car with the baby. But when Sterling saw all the kids following their Dad, he wanted to go too. So I thought, "Well, I guess I can walk part way down, too."

So we started down—I couldn't see Merrill, but I seen one dressed like Rosemary, just turning the bend ahead of me. So I figured they were too far ahead and going faster, so we took it slow and I thought they would be coming back up soon. Finally I got to the bottom and they were not there.

Boy did I feel heartsick. That was a long ways back, and I knew I couldn't carry Sterling, and besides, the family would wonder where I went.

Well, Merrill decided to take a different trail up. He saw me and came back down. I was so glad to see him. Delon took Sterling back on his shoulders and I started back. I had to rest every few feet, my heart was really pounding. I kept telling Merrill, "I can't go this fast." —even Leely could beat me. I was so disgusted. I've run up and down stairs and hiked miles, getting busses and in town and was used to that stuff—but my blood pressure was too high to take the high altitude, I guess. Anyhow, I told Merrill to take the kids back up and I would come when I could.

Well, I got to the last turn and could not get passed it. Merrill got kids back and came back down. He tried to help me, but every time I got on my feet I'd start passing out. After five or six times I told him I couldn't go yet. I didn't even want to talk—too much effort. Se he went after Delon to help carry me out. With only a short ways to go and almost level (what a feeling). Boy, I almost wondered if my time had come.

Suddenly I realized all I'd be leaving and how much more I wanted to do before that time came. Yes, I really did some praying, and it must have helped, because when Merrill and Delon got back, I made out okay by holding on to them.

But I never will forget how I felt when I couldn't make it, because no one ever knows when his hour will come. Well, this time, I really intend to lose weight. If it took this to convince me, then I guess it was worth it.

Nolan came back from the army and started looking the girls over. He met Mardell Stark, who happened to be Patsy's best

friend, and she started coming around visiting a little bit more often after Nolan come home (I can't imagine why!).

They were married March 9, 1963, in the Manti temple. She is such a cheerful friendly girl, so sweet, and always cheerful and happy. I could easily see why he loved her. Now, I figured I had my dozen kids. I loved these two like my own. About this time, I also consented to be a legal guardian for my two nieces and nephew as they had lost their parents.

We had a good time we decided to go somewhere on vacation somewhere besides Joe's Valley, and that was the time we went down to Grand Canyon, and over to see the dam in Arizona. We traveled around a lot that time.

Verna Graduated from Granite High and I told her if she would help me awhile instead of looking for outside work, I'd give her $5 a week spending money, and make the payments on an accordion she wanted, and also pay for her lessons. She was glad to help me and how I appreciated it. After all these years, I could have two or three hours free each day to do something I wanted to do!

Sometimes I felt like a mother bird with a full nest of hungry babies, but I wouldn't have traded places with anyone.

With the Dalleys we had thirteen around the table. It was a challenge having five teenagers in our home, but we did love each other and we had lots of good times and we all went to church together. Roland was made a deacon, then a teacher, and a priest while he lived here. He was a good boy and we love him. Bernice was also a good girl and she was good to help me with her little

brother. Lorraine was only with us a year and then she got married. She'd been a sweet girl, too.

Verna was a stake missionary at this time, and they called her to go on a full-time mission to Australia, and we all gained a better testimony hearing of her experiences. She was really happy, and so was the rest of the family.

I remember when we took her to the airplane, it was kind of hard to let her go, but at least I knew it was for only eighteen months this time. Also I'd been through the experience once with Nolan, so it makes just a little bit easier the second time. But it was still really hard to see her go. We were quite a congregation out there. I remember Kay and Gayle came, too, and Verl, and Leah was just a little toddler then. I don't remember her age.

When Leah was born, it was on my wedding anniversary, 17 August. She was such a special little girl. I loved her so much. I thought, "No one could be happier than I am." All these children around me and a little grandson and granddaughter—it was really wonderful.

Then Delon went to Scotland and before he came back, Patsy was called to Canada, so we were "missionary folks" for quite awhile. When Patsy got her call, she came tearing down the stairs, and we were all sitting around the table (there was thirteen around the table), and she said, "I'm going to Canada! I'm going to Canada!"

Everyone started jumping up and down, they were so excited. I think the supper got cold that night while everyone was trying to congratulate her because she got her mission call.

For about four years, we *really* had the missionaries out! We all enjoyed it.

Then we started getting the marriages.

Verna came home, and while Delon and Patsy were gone, Verna found her true love, Rex Cheney, and they had a wonderful courtship.

In the spring, Delon went into the service.

It was quite a job getting five kids ready for school. I'd hand Ellen and Debby twenty dollars each and say, "You know what you need most, so go get it, but don't ask for any more for clothes."

I thought they done quite well on it—got shoes and socks, and cloth to make two to three dresses each, and bought one dress each ready made. I'd find three dresses on sale for eleven dollars for Leely, and the boys would be clear out of clothes, so I'd have to spend a little more on them.

When Debby was in the ninth grade they had an art show over at Granite Park where she entered couple of posters filled with people's faces, different expressions. We knew it was good, but no one expected her to get the big purple ribbon, "Best of Show."

Oh, if I ever felt like crying. We were all so excited, especially Ellen. You would have thought she was the one that won. She was so proud of Debby. Debby kept saying she didn't deserve it and was so sweet about it.

Chapter 58: A Typical Morning

"Mommy, I'm cold, can I sleep with you?"

"Okay."

Man, something hurting my back. Leely brought her hard soled shoes with her.

"Wa! Wa! Wa!" The littlest one is hungry, so I get up and take care of him, and not wanting to disturb Leely, I snuggle down by Merrill and just get my eyes closed when I hear, "Chuga, chuga, chuga."

That darn pump. Guess he's up to sprinkle the lawn.

I stretch out. An, the whole bed to myself! And then "Rrring!" alarm clock he thoughtfully set. My legs ache and I'm tired, and think After he's gone to work, I'm going back to bed. Ha! Was that a joke.

Five minutes to clear away last night's cake and Jello dishes —eggs in the cellar—no lettuce except in the garden. Forgot he'd told me he'd like mush the next few mornings. Hot cake batter lumpy—beat it harder. Hands tired and ache.

Set the table while my hands rest—back to the batter. Okay, now, sure glad I got his pants ready last night—why doesn't he come in? Last hotcakes cooked. I'll have to look—he's in the farthest corner of the garden. I tell him it's a little later than usual and he's not too happy. Nobody likes to swallow it and run, and where's the mush and why didn't I put lettuce on? It's going to waste in the garden.

The two boys are up and eating and "Will you fix a lunch?"

I eat first. Honey whole wheat hot cakes. Ummm! Awfully good!

I get my instructions on what needs water. Anyhow I can sleep ½ hour, but the girls are up. Patsy needs to go to the dentist on the 9:20 bus. Rosemary and Ellen have swimming lessons at ten so...

"Can we bath now?"

Debby is going to craft house and needs a dollar and help me find my clothes, it starts at 9:00. Rosemary starts sweeping floor. I say, "Do dishes first."

She says, "It's Pat's turn to do dishes and I do floors."

"But Pat has gone to town and won't be home till noon."

She says, "I can't do all those dishes by 10, and it's her turn."

"Okay, okay," I've done them before and front room does need a broom, but I'll rest as soon as they all clear out.

Leely wakes. "I want to go to Cheryl's house."

"Okay, but eat first."

Verna needs a tray. I'll be glad when her mumps are gone. Twenty steps, up and down three times. That darned water. "Check it, Delon."

Strain the milk—kids clear out. I decide to take forty winks. Kids all gone. I'll clear the table first. "We just registered today."

Oh, well. Shall I wash or do last weeks washing? "Wa! Wa!"

Time for baby's bath, and it's not quite 10 and I will keep on like this all day. Just wait til he says, "What a day."

Maybe I'll agree. Maybe I'll say, "But it was nice and cool this morning."

It really was nice when the neighbor called, "Hello!"

Bet she was tired, too.

One day I heard a funny sound in the fridge, like something falling. So I called Debby and Ellen. I opened it slowly, and sure enough, the shelf had been loaded too heavy, and was falling with a load of bottles. I told Debby to hold the door so it wouldn't open too wide, then I held up the shelf the best I could and Ellen reached in, taking out one bottle at a time.

We saved seven out of nine, but the other two slipped and broke and we had a two hour mess of cleaning up glass and milk, so I defrosted the fridge for good measure.

We really laughed about it, though, and decided team work pays off. If we had opened it in a hurry, oh, what a mess there would have been. Like I said, something was always going on in that house—never a dull moment.

I wish I had time to write a book. Of course, no one would believe it actually happened.

Another time Debby asked if she could make pumpkin pie. She made four. They turned out pretty good. We were just sitting around in the front room talking when Ellen said she was expecting her boyfriend.

So Leely said, "Okay now, everybody, pretend I am her boyfriend, and when I ring the doorbell, all of you act decent, and Ellen will ask me in."

Well, she rang the bell, and everyone "took off" like they had been shot at, going in every direction. It was so funny!

Then they came back, and Ellen said, "I hope you don't really act that way."

Well, we were all laughing so hard, how funny it looked with everyone clearing out, and just then the bell rang, and this time it *was* her boyfriend. First we froze. Then we started thawing out and sort of excused ourselves one at a time, so it was okay. But that rehearsal was really funny.

Chapter 59: Flying the Nest

Verna married Rex May 27, 1966. He was a fine young fellow who'd had a mission to Hawaii. They went to the Salt Lake Temple to be married. I was so glad she'd found someone. She'd been a little worried, but I knew the Lord would help her... and He did.

Patsy returned. Everyone was so happy and all went to meet the plane. They had summer clothes on, short-sleeves, etc. When Pat got off the plane she had a heavy fur coat on and high boots. She'd left cold and snow in Canada.

Later, Patsy went to live with a missionary companion.

By now, Lorraine was married and Bernice had moved out, as she wanted to board with a girlfriend's family.

Delon was mostly in Germany and it was a happy day when he came home to stay.

Our Rosemary also found her life's sweetheart, Dwain Sjostrom. He came from Idaho, too, like Rex had. We soon

learned to love him. He'd come from Idaho almost every weekend. Merrill said, "That's a long way to go to court a girl."

He said, "She's worth it."

They were married in the Salt Lake temple September 20, 1968.

At her reception an extra happy sort of guy—not too big, but lively, showed up. He reminded me a little of my dad. He came in smiling, pumping everyone's hand, commenting on how nice everything was, and I thought, "Well, he's sure a nice old guy. I wonder if he is Dwain's relative or just a good friend of the family."

I couldn't seem to keep my eyes off him, as he went around shaking hands, telling jokes, talking to the server girls and people sitting around on chairs. He had a snack to eat with other people at a table and they talked together. Soon he came back to see Merrill and me, and said it was nice and he wanted to thank us for our hospitality. Then he added, "Of course, I didn't know anybody—I must have come to the wrong wedding."

I felt terrible and said, "That does happen, let me get your present back."

"Oh, no," he said, "I want them to keep it. I had a wonderful time and it was worth every cent the present cost me."

And he went out chuckling to himself and smiling and waving all the way to the door. What a character. I kind of wished I did know him. He'd have been an interesting person to have around.

In February of 1968, there was a death in the family. Eugene Ward (Toke) passed away. When we were coming home

from the hospital while Toke was still alive, just before he passed away, we slowed down for a red light, and suddenly I had the most wonderful feeling of happiness come over me—a real joy. I wanted to say to Merrill, "Toke is alright. He is not in any pain. He is so happy that I feel happy, too."

I didn't say anything out loud. It is hard to when something hits you so hard. It was just like I knew everything was wonderful for him. I've never felt that way before. But when Merrill answered the phone and was told of his passing, I knew Toke had been really happy to be released and that he had found great joy wherever he went. I knew this as sure as I was living.

The morning of the funeral, Merrill asked me if I'd sent any flowers. I said I thought I'd give her money instead, because I knew she would need it. He was so disappointed. He said, "We'll give her some money anyway, but sending flowers is the last thing we can do for Toke."

So I said, "Well, there's still time. I'll order them over the phone." So I did.

I didn't think any more of it. They said they could get them there in about a half-hour. A little later I was passing by our phone and I had the darndest feeling someone was going to call. There was nothing unusual in this feeling because many times I knew someone was dialing my number just before the phone rings. Sometimes I'd even say, "Hello Gayle," or whoever it is before they had a chance to say who it is.

Anyhow, it was this same feeling, and I sat down by the phone waiting for it to ring. It didn't ring, but very clearly I knew Toke was thanking me for the flowers. I don't remember the

words. I guess I should have written them down. All I know, he had received the gift of flowers and appreciated them so much that he wanted to let us know.

At the funeral, little Sherry came up to me, and she was looking down at her Daddy's body, and she said, "He knows we are here."

I said, "Yes, Sherry. He knows."

I wasn't just saying the words. Some things I know for sure, and this was one of them.

Another thing, I knew he was okay, and I thanked God that I had the experience. It strengthened my faith.

Later that same year, Roland decided he'd rather live with his sister Lorraine, so he moved out.

Meanwhile, Ellen had moved out into her own apartment with a girlfriend. So we lost four children in less than a year. It was hard for me to adjust to it at first. Then Patsy and Ellen moved back. All the bedrooms were full again.

We were all quite happy together. We were proud of our married children. They were all buying their own homes. They were all raising their children in a way to make us very proud to claim them as grandchildren. The children still at home seemed happy, and everything was "smooth sailing."

Merrill bought a new 1968 Chrysler Newport. It was a beauty. He saved up his money so he could pay cash on it. We all took a ride in it. The children were so happy. We all felt like big-shots riding in this big new car. It's nice to feel that way once or twice in your life.

I worked as a primary teacher eleven years. I've helped Merrill in adult Aaronic work. I've been glad I could do this. There were so many years I was doing full duty as a mother of little ones and couldn't do church work. I always felt my family came first, but now my youngest is nine, and it is good to have time for other things.

Patsy went to a dance and she and George Jarvis found each other. It was like they belonged together. They both loved music, and their church and family... and it wasn't long until they too decided to be married in the Salt Lake Temple June 26, 1970.

In June, 1971, we took Debby to the reception of her favorite teacher. Her teacher was so thrilled to see her. She stooped down and put her arms around Debby and kissed her and said, "Oh Debby, I'm so glad you could come to see me."

She talked to her several minutes (while the line waited) and she told Debby she would write her a letter first and then Debby could write to her. Debby was practically walking on air. I took their picture together. Debby seemed to be enjoying it so much. I asked her if she didn't think it was nice.

She looked around (it was outside) at the grass and flowers and lights and tables and the big table of punch and cake and candy (help yourself deal). She said, "It's nice, but I feel kind of sad, like the last day of school, because I might never see her again."

It was about the sweetest thing you can imagine—so wistful. It almost brought tears.

Sometimes you go back about forty years and see yourself as a child, and that's the way I felt for a minute. Almost everyone

can remember a really favorite teacher and the memory is a beautiful thing years later. Sort of like a shining hour in our lives. I hope Debby always remembers and always loves her.

The next year, Delon had come home from the army (it was Uncle Sam's idea for him to go then to Germany) he met Debby's best friend, Karen Bradley. She was a pretty little blond, with such a sweet innocent way about her. We all loved her. They were married in the Salt Lake Temple July 9, 1971.

Ellen met a college boy, Steve Clark, and she announced they'd be married a month later. Steve seemed to be a nice boy, quite an intelligent conversationalist. I enjoyed hashing over different subjects with him, I still do. We wasn't Mormon. I felt a little sad about that, but I knew he was open minded enough he'd consider the subject later and do his own deciding. I hoped he'd want to be one of us in religion, but if not, I knew at least he loved our daughter and wanted to make her happy. I could see he had a good influence on her, because he did have a good character and a good mind, and he encouraged her to make use of her talents as an artist, so I really was happy about their marriage August 18, 1971, in Salt Lake City.

The Dalleys left our home, each to go their own ways. Suddenly there were only five of us around the table.

We had a lot of fun, the five of us, and did a lot of things together, and took turns preparing the meals.

Then all at once, Debby found herself the tall dark Mr. Right. All of us took to Douglas Hathaway. He was our kind of people and talked our language, friendly, loved his church and

family... and our Debby. He'd been on a mission to Samoa. He married Debby January 25, 1973. They are such a happy couple.

Then Lele was the only one with Sterling. One day Lele saw this young fellow from California that had moved into our ward, and kind of took a shine to him, and he kind of liked her. The only thing was, he was going on a mission. Well, they had three or four dates, I guess, and then he took off. But they wrote letters back and forth. He was called to a mission to the Indians in the northern states and Canada. She wanted to wait for him and I did worry some as they hadn't known each other too long.

When he came back, they started being real sweethearts, and it wasn't very long before he gave her a diamond and they got married.

It's wonderful to see our children choose such fine people. All of our in-laws seem like our very own. I call them my adopted kids. They had to be born to different parents, but now they are grown I can claim them as being especially mine because they married in "by choice."

Sterling grew. When he was fifteen, he had a girlfriend. He was a good student, and president of his teacher's quorum in church. He was almost a genius in things mechanical or electronic. I knew it would be interesting to see how he developed his talents.

I haven't even mentioned our wonderful grandchildren. I never knew I could be so happy. Besides that we had many adopted children, and we love all of them dearly.

New years should start in June when everything seems perfect for making a fresh new beginning. Not so. Like any new start there are always things that are not quite perfect—it's too cold, or it's too soon after the New Years Even party, or you'd like another day or two to get organized after Christmas.

For New Years 1985, by the magic of TV, I could watch the countdown in the Salt Palace, and I could hear "Auld Lang Syne," and fleetingly I thought of the time my parents first considered the joys of parenthood by stepping away from a New Years Eve party. After all, they'd just been married since September. As I listened to the song, "Should old acquaintance be forgot," I remembered how they sang it. And I thought of Merrill's parents, Lealeth and Bill, Aunt Myrtle—so many aunts and uncles—all the dear ones gone before, and as I remembered, a feeling of great longing came over me. To touch them, to talk to them, to hear and see them. But only the love is still left, and it caused an ache inside me. But at the same time, a warm tender feeling, almost as if for a special moment we had silently embraced.

Then the joy startled and flooded through me for all the dear ones still around me, as near as a telephone, or the mail box. I have been truly blessed, and my dear husband, the one I loved most of all, is just a few steps away. How fortunate can a woman be? I went back to bed and lay by him, and it was nice to say, "Happy New Year, Honey," as I have the last 53 years (or is it 54 since I met him). We love each other so.

Morning crept softly into the room, quietly. Objects were easier to see. I lay there awhile, thinking how special it felt to have

a new year start. It brings such hope for something better. There's the same feeling as if I were opening a present. What will it hold? Probably laughter, tears, and maybe a new great grandchild. Maybe other-laws, and for sure new friends, new books, and maybe a few accomplishments.

I'm so full of dreams, of ambitions—yes, of enthusiasm! A person gets discouraged easily enough. Who needs someone to say, "You can't ever make it"? I've been playing that tune to myself too long already. It's time I get a new tune going. But do I have to tell anyone? Nope. Not yet. I intend to write down a few goals. I'm a hard master, and sometimes I lose courage, but only *I* will know how disappointed I can be in myself, so I'll lick the sores privately, if that day comes, and then pick up and carry on. By the end of the year I will be nearer to my goal than I am now.

Dreams are not easily turned into actions that make the dreams come true.

In April 1974 I had a real thrill. I received a letter from the Deseret News saying they liked the children's story I sent to them. They printed it in the April 18, 1974, paper, and it finished on the next day. They also said they would like to buy more children's stories from me. That really made me feel good. They didn't pay a lot, but the stories were so easy to write... for three to five years old. It was called, "Story Time," and it was on the funny page of the Deseret News[20].

I guess you know how I felt when I saw my words in print. They hadn't changed even a word or a comma. It was exactly

20 See the secton of this book with newspaper articles. This one was called, *Charlie plays in the hose*, and *Charlie finally learns*.

how I wrote it, and I kept thinking over and over, "that is my writing. They liked it. It is worth money. That is really my writing." I think only another writer can understand that thrill. Do you know I couldn't even go to sleep until after 2am. I took a hot bath and Aspirins and still I couldn't stop being excited. The story wasn't really that good. It was just a simple little kid story, but here's the exciting thing. I could write 50 more like that without half-trying. And even more exciting, it is like the door is opening and I can see an exciting future.

I love kids. I love to tell them stories. I know the kind they like because I've told so many in primary. So, my foot is on the bottom step of the ladder, but it is on the ladder. I don't know when I was ever so happy.

Chapter 60: Retirement

The minute Merrill retired, many funny things started happening. The oven quit, two burners quit—so we we got a new stove. Then the fridge stopped working and we got that repaired. The washer stopped draining out the water, so he went to work on that, and one night in the bathroom the pipe under the sink (gooseneck) suddenly sprung a hole and started to squirt. I told him all the appliances retired when he did.

The sewing machine too. I thought the dryer had gone and then I discovered someone had pushed in the "air only" button. The windshield wipers quit, the car battery quit, and Merrill figured he better get some snow tires before the tires quit (they went flat while we Christmas shopped).

I don't know what we would have done without our sense of humor. We went to Idaho to see Rosemary and the car wouldn't start again. Merrill said he guessed he'd go build a fire under it. He was gone about three hours (20 degrees below zero) ad Rosemary said, "I wonder what he's doing so long.

I said, "Oh, he's probably out there by a campfire."

She came in laughing. "Mom, he really did build a fire and put hot coals under the car to warm the engine.

Yep, I figured he would.

He got it going, too.

One thing for sure, he couldn't sit still. He would figure out something to do. One day I was at Relief Society and he painted the kitchen four shades of pink. I'm not kidding. He found these half-empty cans in the cellar—a little shiny pink that would go good over the stove, a little flat pink that would be good over the washer and dryer, and this sort of lavender pink for the west wall —*and* a more orange type pink over the east wall.

I couldn't help it, I just started laughing and I thought I would never stop. I didn't want to hurt his feelings. He'd worked so hard, but why all those part cans? He gave the classic answer.

"You didn't want it to go to waste, did you?"

"Of course not, I just want to look at it the rest of my life. Actually, it is cheerful, and I don't think you would notice it much if you don't look too hard."

Getting used to a retired husband is sort of like getting used to a new member joining your family—all the changes necessary to make *all* of you happy. But after you get used to the idea of having him around *all* the time, you wonder how you ever got along without him, especially when he's the loving appreciative kind of guy like I've got.

A filing system is no good unless you can find what you filed. Behind a certain place... or under this stack or that—as long

as nobody else ever moved anything. It was filed, wasn't it? I watched Merrill look for a measuring tape one day. He was sure so & so hadn't returned it. I was just as sure it had been returned because so & so got his own for his birthday. Oh, yes, he found it —tucked away in a corner on the highest shelf where he'd hid it so his son couldn't find it and use it. So it's a foregone conclusion, a person should keep a secret notebook of all those "good places" we secretly put things into.

I once read an article on not putting off for ten days what you could take care of today. That makes you always ten days behind. Sounds logical, the only trouble is, you're so caught up in all the "gotta-dos" you never get time for the "want-to-dos."

Merrill's like that. It's a good trait and he gets a lot done, but I get a little sad sometimes, thinking of the fun things he's missing—and even sadder, sometimes, I think forgetting the joy of just playing hooky. I'd catch myself forgetting, and it'd worry me a little. Must I also be a creature of habit?

I remember the joy I had one spring morning when I stepped outside to check on the children and I smelled the lilacs—ah, it was euphoria! I sat down in the sand pile and we built castles together—one whole hour or more. Sure, I had to rush the rest of the day to catch up, but I still remember the lilacs!

Merrill and I started being happier the day we decided we'd never be rich, so why break our necks trying? Funny, how you expect so much of yourself when you are real young, and after you get away from that so much, then all at once you start enjoying the little happinesses, like a night out, or a good dinner,

and you think, *Gee, we're not doing so bad compared to some people we know who have been married just as long.* Then you really start to appreciate life for what it is, and what you have to enjoy at the present, rather than always worrying and pushing hard for the future.

There is so much to see if you have eyes to see with. Merrill and I were always like a couple of kids that way. If you can't stay young in body you can still stay young in the joy of living.

Once we had a quick argument. Neither of us could understand how quickly it caught us both up and then dumped us, quiet and miserable—after a few hours of silence he come to me and said quite matter of factly—as though reporting news hid heard on TV. He said, "I don't know who those other two people were that came in here, but I sure miss my sweetheart."

I said just as calmly, "Well, I don't know who they were either, but I hope they don't come back!"

He laughed and held out his arms and I was in them—and such a loving we had! I still remember.

The quarrel? Who knows? I don't even remember it. Anybody can get tired and "out of sorts" but why take it out on your true love?

Rocks On a Hilltop

Rocks gathered on a sunny hill with the one I love. With a quick compare, we could see some of the treasures each had discovered from the rocks we gathered. All colors and shapes, some round, some common gray, but when broken open held mysteries of red and crystal white, or silvery specks that made you wonder how the

treasures got inside—small brown rocks that looked like chili beans and funny zebra striped black and white rocks, and square ones like chunks of cake, and suddenly a bright red spot would shine out like a ruby.

Here and there a thin piece of flint appeared shaped almost like an arrow. Thin, sharp, translucent pieces, pinks, purples, and my favorite, the white that looked like cloudy ice or half melted snow. We found a whole hill top of flint as if it had boiled from a volcano and turned into solid glass.

It was like we discovered gold, like it tumbled in chunks down the hillside. We gathered handfuls in seconds, every shade of purple, red, orange, yellow, etc. We stood there almost helpless, knowing we couldn't take it all, so we said calmly, "We'll just take the very choicest and tiniest pieces."

We filled cans and buckets and sat down for a minute almost in desperation as if it would go away if we didn't hurry.

Then I looked at it—his collection of rocks in rusty filled cans, overflowing. And he saw my bucket, rounded up and full, and we laughed together as we looked at our collection of treasures. The rocks set, while he held me tight in his arms; the sky was very blue with white fluffy clouds floating by like mighty ships to a maybe neverland.

Maybe never—but we found it, paradise rediscovered in a golden sun in a blue sky, aspen trees swaying and making their chattering sound from a warm gentle breeze on a beautiful summer day—sounds of water running over rocks. And all around us rocks to be picked up. Treasures to take home to touch a feel and see, but mostly remembering two sun-tanned children,

hand-in-hand, marveling because God had created all of this just for them.

In 1976 I had a dream about Dad[21]. I thought he came to see me. It was back in the olden days when I had so many children home. I was so busy and had so much to do and, suddenly Dad and Mom and Ruby and Warren were all there, and I was trying to set the table to get all of them fed, and it was such a scramble and I was so tired.

Dad was sitting by himself and he was so quiet and he looked sad. I went to him to put my arms around him and talked to him something like this, "Oh, Dad, don't look so sad. Don't you know I love you, too. It just seems the others always need me and I keep so busy taking care of them, I never seem to get time to spend with you. I want to. I think you and I always had so much in common. We think alike. We look at life and religion in the same way. We both try to put our values where they count.

"Dad, I think I learned more from you that is good for me than from any other person. How can I ever make it up to you? How can I really let you know how much I love you?"

Then wouldn't you know that I'd wake up before I could be sure he knew I loved him. But I knew he loved me. I could feel his love. Isn't it strange that with some people you just know? It's like

21 This account was actually a written in a letter by Leola *to* her Dad in 1976. It was rewritten for this book as if she is talking *about* her Dad. In the original account, it begins, "Dad, a couple of days ago I had a dream about you. I thought you came by to see me..."

they put a warm blanket around you when it's cold, or like a soft light when you are afraid of the dark. It's not anything you can ever quite explain, but you know when you are loved.

Dad left an influence in my life that was tremendous.

Around this time, Merrill was getting a little restless because most of his gardening work was over and he wasn't quite ready to settle down with a good book. He spent a study period every morning after his exercises. I was really proud of him, the way he wanted to keep his mind and body active. Reading was not as enjoyable to him as it was to me, but he was so much better in that respect than he used to be.

I could see he wanted some interesting project to work on, so one day I said to him, "Honey, it sure would be nice if I had a few more shelves so I'd have a place for all my books."

I had them scattered everywhere, upstairs and down. He agreed, and said he would make some across the north wall of the TV room. Then as he looked it over he decided he might just as well make it go all around the corner, like the other corner was. This was great, and I was really excited.

It surely did look nice. Then he said, "You know we could have a few shelves there behind the door to put nick-knaks on (narrow).

I said, "A good idea."

Then, after he finished that, he decided to make some deeper shelves for my big books on the west wall between the door and window. So then three of the walls in that room were filled with shelves and almost filled with books. It is just pure beautiful, to me.

Well, when he got all those shelves painted, he decided to paint the other wall and ceiling too, all the same color, and it looked so nice and clean. I told him is was like having a dream come true. I just couldn't believe it. I'd get up in the night and come in and look at it and touch it and say, "It really happened. I really do have a place for all my books and papers."

I've learned in married life, you can get along with a man a lot better by using a sense of humor and a little kidding, than you can with all the squalls. Whenever we do get up against a problem with two sides I ask myself the question, "Now is this thing worth a headache?" If I figure it is, I dig in. If not, I let it blow itself out." Mostly it blows.

Once I had cut up some celery, onions, carrots, potatoes—the usual, and I had been cooking some beets, too, and I figured the juice would have some good nutrition in it so I dded the beet juice. Wow! What a pretty pink. It tasted good, but looked so weird it was hard to eat.

Merrill said, "The best thing to do with that is hide it under a crust."

So I did, and it was better, but we still couldn't eat it all. Duce wouldn't even touch it. So Merrill said hide it in the fridge a day or two then we will see what happens.

Once Merrill was retired, both of us did the dishes. Sometimes he washed them, sometimes I did, and sometimes we did them together. It was so nice to have a good helper, especially if you've been doing them mostly by yourself for about fifty years.

It's surprising how much a person forgets about baby tending. Merrill and I went to Idaho to bring Daniel and Sheila Sjostrum home for a couple weeks while Rosemary and Dwain had their baby boy. I knew they'd probably get hungry on the way home, so I packed a lunch, including jam sandwiches, because most kids like them. But I forgot about the sticky. Poor little Dan, he was really in misery. He's used to feeling clean. For years I carried a plastic bag with a damp washrag in it just for kids, but I'd forgotten.

Another thing, I wasn't hungry when we got home as we'd had a good lunch, and I didn't think of food—and they didn't say anything. So I got them ready for bed, kissed them goodnight, and just as I was going out of the room, Daniel said, "Grandma, how come you sent us to bed without any supper?"

Wow. That is about the last thing I would want to do. So he had a dish of Jello and then he was fine and went to bed.

We had a fun time with the kids. I didn't know if I could do it again. I took them to the store a few times, and even Relief Society once. We made a tape to send to their parents and I guess I told them a hundred stories. They love stories.

Leely was too involved with Keith to pay much attention to them, and Sterling came home and had to do his studies. Even Dan noticed they were busy and preoccupied. He said, "Grandma, I think you have a different Sterling."

I said, "Yes, he's a big man now."

Before they left, Dan said, Grandpa, can you show us more movies of how we look when we are big?"

I made them some little house slippers and Sheila said, "It's so nice to have a grandma and Grandpa that likes to do things for you."

She got a kiss and hug for that. It's nice to be appreciated and loved. Children always love you but after they grow up it is harder for them to say it.

Chapter 61: Early Morning

I think spring is the loveliest time of the year! I can see birds in the Cedar trees outside my window. They are chirping and happy because the sun is shining today. The snow is almost melted. I'm glad when I can see the grass turning greener, and see new green leaves on the bare branches of the bushes and trees and then the best of all when the lilacs start to bloom. I think they are my favorite flower.

I love early morning peace and quiet. I love having time just for me—the sounds of traffic on the highway, far enough away to be interesting; the quiet pulsing sound of our heating system, like a faithful heart—needed but hardly ever noticed; passing traffic—like friends waving a greeting as they hurry on. The quiet times... nice.

The starts are so bright in early morning; the sky is filled with stars, and I'm filled with wonder. I marvel at all God's creations—the tall trees, full of leaves, yet still and dark at this hour; the edge of mountains, quietly waiting there for sunrise.

Houses, roads quiet yet, all waiting in a shushed sort of way as if remembering, "This is the time to be reverent, to remember the creator." For even in this darkest hour He could give us the stars.

So many things I want to write, and my pen cannot move fast enough. Oh, it *is* going to be a good day—it's not even light yet and there is snow on the ground. But oh, I can see so far ahead, beyond all that snow and cold, beyond the frozen mountains, to a day so bright with sunshine and flowers and green things growing. Oh I can see all the dear familiar faces I loved, and it's almost like I could touch them, and hear their happy voices just barely out of reach—but so surely there and waiting just for me. No wonder I feel happy today. It's nice to feel the joys of anticipation. It's nice to be so near!

I see the brightest star in the east, high above the dark mountain and the bare limbs of the tree, and it was shining so brightly. I wonder how long it had been there—long before I was born, and I knew it would shine for others long after I was gone. Comforting.

Kitty came to the door and wanted out, so I let her, and for a minute I stood in the open doorway. It was cool, the air all crisp and sweet smelling. Always it seems there's a magic feeling about early morning, like the whole world was renewed—like it had cleaned things up during the night so it could start out fresh and new. Again, all things seem possible. It's like being reminded, "God *is* in His Heaven," and He knows what's going on. He's in charge.

Sure, He gives us a chance to run things in the daytime, and sometimes we do a lousy job. We waste precious time and opportunities.

But we do a few good things, and each morning here we are ready to start over, to add to our little stack of good things accomplished. It's a nice feeling. Kitty and I came in again, where it is warmer. We will rest a little longer. It is still early.

Chapter 62: The Writing Bug

As for the "Writing Bug," it really is funny. All my life I wanted to see my name in print and wanted to influence a few lives for good and the funny thing is, I think I could have done it, but I was always so busy with more important things (at the time... and I used that for an excuse also).

How I wish I had started earlier. That is my one regret. I was busy, but I could have made a little more time.

I enjoyed the book of the "housewife/writer." One place she brought out to, "not be afraid of being known as a writer," and letting your family take pride in your efforts. That was one place where I really fell down. I know now that some of my older children would have ben happy to cooperate. It wasn't until I got the last four that I started to realize that children can take pride in a mother's accomplishments as well as a father's. I'm not blaming anyone but myself, especially when I had the Dally children, I know I could have had more help from them, and from the rest,

but I always figured, "I'll have my chance when they are all gone."

I was doing good, too, and suddenly Merrill retires and it's a whole new set up, and once again my life was not my own, or so I thought! I had a terrific adjustment (and he never even knew it).

Then one day I decided I was tired of being the one to not ever do what I wanted to do, so a new understanding was established that I'd have certain times for reading and writing. I'd much rather go visiting a lot of times, but he'd rather stay home. And so we learn "to give and take." I don't know what I'd do now if I hadn't developed a love for reading and for writing. So, the moral of the story is (smile) don't ever give it up, just put more of yourself into it.

I was telling Merrill about it one day and I said, "Now I have the time, the opportunity, the know how! But the desire is not so strong anymore.

I'll never forget how he looked. He said, "Oh, don't give up now! You always wanted to." And he looked so hurt. He'd even bought me a nice desk for Christmas a year ago, and he never seemed to mind when he sees me here typing away.

I guess the whole thing is, I found out it really is work to get your writing shaped up just how you want it, and maybe I just got tired of working! In other words, the romance has gone out of it and I'm down to "nitty gritty."

It's still quite a thrill though, when you can write something that causes another person to feel the emotion you were trying to put across. I wrote a little shortie called "Purple Petunias," how Ellen told me she was getting married. It was just the way it

happened, and I'd felt kind of blue, so I wrote it down and got rid of my blues. Well, three or four of the family read it and I'd be surprised how every time it brought tears to their eyes—just a page and half of my typing. Of course, they knew the girl and the situation, and that helped I'm sure, but it really brought home the power in words, just the same.

I don't know if I could ever sell that piece. It's too close to the heart, but for me it filled a need. It helped me express myself and that was important to me at the time.

I always wished I'd had a child that wanted to write. Some of them did a little mostly to please me I think, but none of them had "the bug." There is a difference.

If you get it, don't ever give it up. Let it rest sometimes, like I have, but always have it there, like a treasure you can go to, so you can say, "this is my own special thing. No one can ever take it from me." It's always there, maybe dormant, but ready to come to life. The environment doesn't hurt it.

I have the strangest feeling about what a person writes. Sometimes I feel I have visitors from the "other side" who are also interested. Many times when I've been searching for just the right word, I've felt inspiration, as if someone *put* the thought into my mind. That sounds creepy. I don't mean it that way. It's just like you are searching for a lost article and suddenly there it is in plain sight and you say to yourself, "Now that's what I wanted to say."

It's strange sometimes how thoughts come so clear, and it's easy to express yourself in words, and you write it all down, and then sometimes you look over the things you wrote and you're critical, and think, "Well, the lines don't match up, and the

rhythm isn't quite right." You're not satisfied, so you tuck it away in a drawer, and never do much about it.

I've found out if I keep erasing and doing over, I'm never satisfied with the results anyhow. So sometimes it's just better to leave well enough alone and then go on from there.

One day after my "workers" had gone I started looking at my old "writings" and said to to myself, "this is good and I *am* a writer. It's no longer a "some time dream." I am right now. I like this writing better than some I've been reading lately." And with the realization the old ambition was reborn. This was a "gotta do it" thing now.

One time when Merrill and I were going to see a show, I wanted to see a certain one, and he said, "Well, what do you want to go back and see that for? We've already seen that show."

I said, "Yes, but it was such a good show, I'd like to see it over."

He said, "Well, I think that's silly, because while you're spending time looking at that one over again, you could be seeing something completely different and new. You're just wasting your time."

Of course, there are two ways of looking at that, but I hadn't thought of his angle before, that while you're spending time reliving some things, you are losing time on other experiences you might be having. Who knows, you might not like the next show as well as you liked this show, so a few we've seen over to please me, but most of the time, we go on to the next.

This is sort of the same way with things I write. It used to be that I would work over something, and work over it.

Sometimes I'd get it just the way I wanted it, and then after I'd polished my diamond, it was just clear cut, fine and true just the way I wanted it. But I bet you I've got a million around here that are diamonds in the rough, if you know what I mean!

It's easier to go on to do something else, and then there's those days where you don't feel so much like being creative—then you can go back and polish up what you had.

I was thinking one day, when was the first time that I had this desire to write, and express myself in words? I really couldn't remember. Seems like it was way back. I know it was before I went to school, because I remember I just couldn't wait till I could go to school so I could put down in letters the things that I was thinking.

Oh, I'll never forget the terrific disappointment the first time I tried to go to school, and they said I wasn't quite six years old, so I'd have to wait. It was the world for me, because I wanted to learn so very much. So I came home and I decided I had to learn all the words that I could, like, "Milk" on the milk can, and "Cocoa" on that, and pick up letters out of the newspaper. I was *always* asking questions.

Mother and Dad were patient.

Finally the day did come when I could go to school, and I still remember how happy I was there, and how much I enjoyed learning to read.

How excited I was to be able to read my own stories. I remember dad and mother used to read to me, and I enjoyed hearing these stories. I thought it was fun.

I just couldn't wait to do my own reading and then as soon as I was able to, I wanted my writing.

I don't remember which poems I wrote first, but I remember writing one about dad that said, "I loved you with eyes of blue, and you were my daddy too," or something like that. There wasn't much to it. I was only first or second grade.

Then one day I remember real well, when I was in about third grade. I saw the flag was waving in a little breeze, and you could see the red, white, and blue, and rippling through—the stars and dark blue. I was just filled with such a thrill, I thought, if I couldn't draw a picture of that. If I could only write the words to it.

So I spent the next little while writing to the flag, and when I was all through, it didn't say what I wanted it to at all. I was so disappointed, and I tore the paper all up, and I threw it away and cried about it. You know, I can still remember the thrill I felt, and sometimes I think this is what poetry is for, and what stories are for.

It's the message that gets across. It's not always that the words are "right." Words are like tools. You just have to farm it and shape it. You know what you mean inside of yourself, but getting that idea across to the other fellow so he will feel the emotions you are feeling, well, that's a gift. That's also something you've got to work at.

Dad was very good at that. I just thoroughly enjoyed the poetry he's written, and the things he said—they're deep. A lot of times there's more meaning than you realize right at first. I know that sometimes you can't always express yourself as well as you'd

like to. I know that feeling, because I can't either, but when you do fix something that says what you want it to say, oh, isn't that a thrill? It's just like finding gold or something. You just want to take it out and show it to everybody, and shout, "Look! This is what I meant! Do you understand what I meant?"

Well, sometimes they understand what you meant, and sometimes they just look at you and shrug it off like, "So, what."

You have to tell yourself, "Well, anyway, I enjoyed writing it."

And then of course, you'll always run across somebody that does understand because they have the same feeling. I think this is kind of special. Not everyone has that deep gift of appreciation. I think it's one we should cultivate—each of us.

It's nice to be appreciated.

It's amazing how we may think over the same things so many times and then one day we sit down to write about it and the words just seem to fall into place, as if that was something you already had figured out. It's strange how sometimes a poem seems to write itself.

Later you come back to read it over and you feel the same mood and you feel surprised, and ask yourself, "How come it was so easy? How come the words seemed to write themselves?"

It's rare, but when it happens, you always remember and you are thankful.

Then, something happens and you sort of "chug" along, not quite sure. You've got the idea, but it just doesn't "write itself" anymore.

So many things I want to write... Oh, I have so many stories to tell.

Feelings *After* the Writing Block Passed

The excitement of wanting to get up. It's like starting to live again. How can I explain such a happy feeling? Again, at last, it's me! How do you explain the "Oh, it's good to be home again," feeling, when you haven't been anywhere? And yet, feeling of contentment, even joy and anticipation for whatever new and joyful experience is in store for me in discovering this very day! Oh, it's good to feel! And I know it's there! It's like I'd been outside in the cold on a dark night with winds howling and a feeling of being lost or a long ways from home. Then quite suddenly I see the form of it like a house right before me, and I run to get the door. And when I open it, the light streams out to greet me. The warmth, the joyful souns of family and friends, the fragrance of good cooking. In an instant, I'm part of it—all the familiar parts of it—all the dear familiar parts of it, love is swirling around me—a feeling of such joy and contentment I didn't dream existed.

Suddenly I want to run like a child from room to room, touching, seeing, making sure it is all still there.

Oh, dear familiar room. The chair, the lamp, my desk and books—quickly I must find a notebook or a piece of paper and a pen. I must write as quickly as I can, to put it all down while I am so full of the joy of it. Ah, at last, to be back, to know and feel again the joy of writing, of expressing my thoughts. It's so good to feel the excitement, the hopes, the struggle for just the right word to convey a meaning. Oh, it is good to be back—to feel the

exhilaration, the challenge. And to know I can do it. Only another writer would know what I'm talking about, but oh, it's good to be home!

Chapter 63: Father's Last Words

We surely had a wonderful trip to Canada. We went to the Cardston temple while were were there. We went to Glacier National park, Waterton Park, and up to the Glacier ice fields. We got to see the Canadian Rockies and all their ruggedness with snow-capped peaks, beautiful lakes, *so* beautiful.

We saw lots of interesting people. At Lake Louise there were so many different nationalities, I kept looking around and talking to them.

Delon said, "I think Mom is as interested in the tourists as she is in the scenery."

I said, "Well, that's true!"

We had a lot of fun. Duce came, too, and slept on the front seat. Merrill and Delon took turns driving. They paid for the gas and we furnished the food.

In December 1977, Rosemary and her family visited. It was Sunday morning and we decided to go to Sunday School

together. Rosemary and I were not quite ready and it was time to be going, so we suggested that Dwain take Sterling and the children in one care, and we would come later in another car, so we did. The only trouble with that I couldn't find my glasses to drive. Rosemary volunteered, but then I couldn't find the keys, so we ended up walking.

The next day, after they had gone home, I took the place apart looking. I moved everything moveable. Looked under, over, and in between, on chairs, couches, books, desks, through cupboards, and as a final place went through my closet and bedroom. I found the keys in back of the closet caught up in something that had fallen, so that was encouraging, but nowhere could find any glasses or pieces of glass or frames. They were gone.

From Monday to Thursday I searched. I even looked upstairs and outside in cars. Nowhere. I kept trying to remember the last time I had seen them. I knew for sure I had them on when I went to Grand Central the week before, so I asked there. They didn't have them.

I kept getting an impression I had seen them in a little box about 9X12 on the table with a few other odds and ends like thread, pens, scissors, wires of Duce's etc. I knew so exactly what that little box looked like and I knew I had my glasses in it, but I couldn't remember where I put the box. Lots of times I would gather up odds and ends in a container of some kind when I would clean the rooms. Then after sweeping, dusting, etc. I put the odds and ends away where they belong. Or I would tell Sterling about the things he had in it so he could take it upstairs.

He didn't know about any box, and I couldn't find it, so I figured it was my imagination.

Thursday morning I decided I either had to find those glasses or else go to order a new pair. I didn't like the cost. Besides it really upset me to where they could be. I dumped the drawers one at a time on my bed and put them back. I looked through every single thing in there. I honestly didn't know where else to look.

So I said half to myself, "If I only knew what room it was in, I'd concentrate on that place."

Then I had a strange feeling—"So near, and yet so far."

I didn't understand, but I decided to pray about it once more. I told the Lord I knew it was my own carelessness. I was ashamed of being careless, and I'd really try to take care of them if I found them. I told him if I just had a clue as to where they had gone it would help. Immediately, the picture of the box of odds and ends flashed into my consciousness again, and then someone said, "Why don't you call Valley Bank?"

I was puzzled. Sure I'd been to the bank last Friday after Thanksgiving but I hadn't taken my purse, just my bank book so I could draw out some money to buy Sterling a new coat. He needed one and said he would drive, so there was no need for me to have my glasses or purse.

Then suddenly it hit me what had happened. I was going past the table on my way out to the car. I saw the box on the table full of odds and ends. I thought to myself, "If I leave my glasses there, the children may take them while I'm gone." So I just put them on without thinking. When I got to the bank I had to make

a withdrawal slip out, and I'd probably just put my glasses down for a minute so I could see to write better, and then walked off without them.

I called the Bank, described them, and they had them. I'll never forget how glad I was to have them again.

There are so many things my father and I wanted to say to each other when we knew the hour of parting was near, but there were no words that could express the love that we had for each other.

He said, "I have family there, too."

I said, "I know, but they can wait a little longer, we love you so."

Then he said, "I don't want to hurt anyone."

For the first time I knew he wanted to go. He was lonely for his sweetheart and his other children. I knew too that he loved each person as an individual, as someone special. Even the newest great grandchild was a special delight to him.

So on the last visit, the last time we really talked, I said to my Father, "Do you think I don't know how much you love us?"

Tears came to his eyes.

I said, "Dad, you showed us through all these years how much you loved us, and these things you want to say don't really matter that much. I know all I ever wanted was for you to be happy."

He smiled, and without any more words than that, we both knew it was in the Lord's hands now.

I still felt his spirit near later, and felt his love.

It was hard to put it down in words when so filled with emotion. Writing was sort of a "safety valve" to me—if someone kept me from doing/saying things I'd be sorry for after. And it also calmed me when I was upset or unhappy. Like the morning of the funeral, I couldn't sleep again. I got a headache, and nothing seemed to take away the empty feeling, so I thought I'd write, but the words just wouldn't come. So I prayed a little, and cried a little (for myself). And then a peaceful feeling came over me. I knew I wasn't alone and I wanted to write about our Dad. So I did.

The only way I could handle my grief was to want his happiness more than my own. I pretended he has gone on a trip —a happy, exciting trip, that he is young and strong, and will again, because he is. I got busy doing other things until he someday comes back to take me there on that trip, too. Both of our parents seemed to see their dead parents in those last hours, so why shouldn't we? It must be wonderful to have someone you love around to comfort you when you too receive your call home.

Our Dad wasn't perfect, and he'd be the first to admit it, but he was a good Dad. He brought so much sunshine and real happiness into our lives. How lucky we were to have him so many years.

My Father never did much preaching about what is right and what is wrong. He just set a good example. He looked for good in every one. I never heard him criticize anyone because they didn't do what he did. He thought a person had the right to choose how he would worship. He had found the way that pleased him, and he found great joy and comfort in his religion, and even

those who did not agree with him had to say, "He is a good man." He earned their love and respect.

Someone told me once, "your Father is a gentle soul." I had never thought of it that way, but then I remembered how kind and understanding he had been when I was a child in his home. If he spoke up quickly sometimes, it was because he wanted things done in the right way. The beauties of nature all around us, the good deeds of someone he knew, the joys of home and family. He would get so filled with the joy of living that he would write poetry and song poems. He would give his written words to anyone who showed the slightest interest just because he wanted to share. He had such deep appreciation and was so thankful just for the privilege of life itself. He whistled and sang, and loved music.

He was worried because he didn't have anything to leave us in worldly possessions.

I said, "Oh Dad, you have given us so much, in the things you taught us. I couldn't ever repay you for all you've given. All the love—the hard work, the example you lived. I just wished I could give so much to my own children."

He seemed more contented then. He told me he felt that way about his father too and asked how he could ever repay him for all it had cost to raise him to manhood. He told how his father said, "Son if you will raise your children the best you know how, then I will feel you have repaid me in full."

My father can go to his father with the full knowledge he did his best.

He may have gone where I couldn't see him anymore, but I knew that he still lived. He cared about me, and someday I would see him again. It was time for me to be patient, to try to live then, to show by my example the path I would want my children to follow, just as he did.

I am so glad I knew him. He was an influence for good in my life. I am so thankful for the memories he left me. I will try hard not to grieve because I know he is happy with those who went on ahead of us. I hope someday to be found worthy to go there too.

I loved my parents so much , I was glad when they were together at last.

Years later, I had a couple dreams of Dad. Once out in the camper, I thought I awakened and there he was looking through the window, smiling, young, very much like the picture we have of him and Mom together. I said, "Oh, Dad, I'm so glad to see you."

He said, "I'm okay. No need to worry over me.

And I knew he was.

Another night I dreamed I came into my front room and there he was sitting by the phone, all dressed up in a suit and tie like he had just come home from church. He didn't say anything, just smiled and I sat down by him so happy to see him. It was comforting knowing he loved me and had come to see me.

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Early one morning in November 1985 I had a dream. It made such a deep impression I had to write it down.

It seemed I had been attending a meeting. Many people in a church or large place like that. I don't know why I was there. I

just know as I was leaving, some one stopped me –[By a touch on the arm or something else as quiet]. I turned to see who wanted to speak to me. He was tall, slim man. He had been with a group or at least one other man and he let him know he would soon join him, so the other man [or men] moved on- also I let the crowd [leaving the building] pass by me—then the two of us where there alone facing each other, and suddenly I recognized Brother Steiner—He seemed to be very much alive, alert, and I could tell by his expression he was deeply concerned about something. He said to me "Tell Merrill to not feel discouraged. He did a good work. He was loyal and dependable. He did his work well."

And I will testify of that. Then, I knew he had to go, that he had to get on with the particular work he was doing. He had to catch up to the other man[or men] he had been with, but he stood there, hesitating, until I nodded and said. "I will tell him." Suddenly he was gone. I wondered again as I had so many times why he had to leave this life so suddenly. As if in answer to my thoughts, I was standing in his home, as a visitor. I saw him there, He seemed to be waiting, in his hallway by the stairs. Again I saw another man beside him, talking to him. I don't know what was said, I just saw Brother Steiner walk away with the man who had come, and something tumbled down the steps, almost like a shadow would. When I looked down to see what it was, there was the body of Brother Steiner—And I thought, "How can this be? He was already gone with the stranger on urgent business."

Then I awakened. I remembered Brother Steiner had passed on. I also knew he and Merrill thought a lot of each other. Why shouldn't he feel concerned?

I knew also he had received a call or a message that he was needed. I know he did not hesitate, but he was willing and ready to go. I knew whatever work he is doing is important, but he still has time to be concerned about friends and people he left behind.

I don't know why the message he had was given through me. Maybe I just happened to be in tune, and he knew he could depend on me to see it was given. So I write this down, so I can give a page to Merrill. It is true—otherwise I would not dare to write it.

Chapter 64: Halley's Comet

Did you get to see Halley's Comet? I'm not sure if I did or not, but I tried. I think there is only one more chance now, in April, and they said the moonlight might make it hard to see it. Well, if the moon light is going to be that much brighter, I'm sure it is not like the time my father saw it.

Dad often talked about Halley's Comet. He had seen it when he was young and he had hoped he would live long enough to see it again. He told me that he hoped I would look for it, because if I did see it, the way he saw it years ago, I'd never forget it.

He told me it was really a bright star with a long tail, and many people were afraid of it. They started talking about how this was one of the "signs of the times" and it was surely "the last days." Many people were afraid of all the bad things that were going to happen – that this was only the beginning.

Dad said he didn't remember that his folks seemed to worried. They figured if they put their trust in the Lord, He would

take care of them. He told me he felt a little worried but not too much. He said he was excited that he could see such a thing, and he sure hoped he'd lived to see it again. He said it made him marvel just to look up at the sky – to see all the stars and know that each one was created by our Heavenly Father, just like we were – that as far as our eyes could see there were more stars, and maybe someday our spirits would be free to go as far out there as we wanted to go. It was quite an impressive idea to me, and I remember thinking how small I was, in comparison, and yet I felt like I was important to my Creator, too.

I was thinking of those things as I went out into the darkness one morning. They had told us on television the previous night that we might be able to see it between four and five A.M. I'd been looking for several mornings now.

Far away, I could hear a few roosters crowing, to welcome the new day, and I could hear the soft sound of dogs calling to each other. At least one seemed to bark, and he got answering barks from all around, but none were very near. I thought I heard the droning o a plane up in the clouds, but it kept on, and I knew it must be trucks over on the highway. Lots of truckers go out early. My man used to be one of them. I liked the happy busy sound they made.

The sky was still quite dark, too dark to tell where the mountains meet the sky. I could see many stars, but none that looked different or unusual. I watched a long time. A cool breeze blew against my cheek and hair. It wasn't really cold, just cool.

Once I thought sure I was seeing something special in the East. It lightened up the sky. Then I realized a string of lights had

turned on, over towards the hills. So many people are building along the foothills now. I wonder how they ever get up there in winter when it is icy.

I followed the lights of a plane, with my eyes, as it crossed the sky from over our house toward the mountains. I could hear its motor.

Then I saw a similar light in the south, and it gradually traveled east, right along the sky line. I wondered if this could be the planet. I couldn't hear any motor sound, and it was going slower. Besides I'd never seen a plane go in that direction, just above the tops of the mountains. Then it just faded out of sight.

I thought to myself, "Was that it?" If it was, it surely wasn't what I'd expected. They did tell us it was closer the last time around, when my father saw it.

Yesterday, Merrill and I had both looked and we had seen something that we wondered about. We didn't know if it was just skinny cloud, or if it was a long tail. It looked strange with binoculars. This morning there hadn't been a tail on the light I had watched, and yet there seemed to be a streak. I came in, looked at the clock. It was about 4:45. So, maybe, and maybe not. Anyhow, I've seen the pictures on TV that were taken and I feel like I did try to see it.

I'm glad my Dad told me about it. I'm glad he told me to put your trust in the Lord, and you don't have to be afraid. I've thought of those words so many times. They ARE true, you know. And I've tried them out lots of times. He is there, and He cares about each one of us.

Chapter 65: Near Death Experience

It happened in 1988.[22] Everything seemed natural as I started my Day's work I remember our son Kay was talking to his Dad in the kitchen and I was ready to wash a batch of clothes. I reached down to get the soap out of the container and suddenly got sick to my stomach, so I just went to the bathroom for a while. The sickness didn't leave. I tried to work, but I got so weak—my husband worried. I found I couldn't even keep down a drink of water. By noon we called the doctor, and by night I was in the hospital. [23]

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22 It was probably in 1988, though it could have been 1987. The actual text is in a letter or note dated May 17, 1989, which begins, "It happened over a year ago. Everything seemed..."

23 In a audiocassette recording, Leola briefly mentions this incident: "There's a tune I really like that's really close to my heart—I danced with just about every one of my children to it when they were little. I think they called it, "You Belong to My Heart, Now and Forever."

"The song reminds me of when I was at the hospital, and my friends were there, and they were both very ill—all three of us were so ill we couldn't even get up to go see each other. We'd just ask the nurses how the others were doing."

I stayed there six days. They never did find out what was wrong. I think they gave me every test and pill they had. They even tried cat scan and brain wave tests and all came out normal, but I could only take small bits of nourishment, and of course the IV in my arm. Then one day I started to pass out or stop breathing. I did this four times while they used oxygen and other things to revive me. Okay, that's the picture.

I had a dream. I saw a pink looking casket, and in it was a lady dressed in her temple clothes. I thought, "Oh, one of my friends is going to die." I had two friends in the hospital at the same time, and I felt so bad because I loved both of these ladies very much. I wondered if it was the one named Lillie or the one named Marie.

I looked a little closer and I found out it was me. Then I turned around to see if anyone else could see "the lady." I saw someone all dressed in white. He looked like an angel and I seemed to know who he was. I could tell he was a spirit.

I don't remember feeling anything. I felt a little curious about the whole thing. I said, "Well, where am I?"

He said, "I have come to take you to the Father."

I didn't mind. I seemed to be glad to go. I wasn't a bit afraid. I saw mourners passing my coffin and thought to myself. "So this is what it is like to die."

The person that had come to get me seemed a little anxious to get going. I said, "Well, what is it like?"

Then it seemed the scene changed and I was swept away to a place where every thing was light and beautiful. There was joyous feeling in the air like when a person is suddenly given good

news. I could see a place just ahead and I wanted to go inside—it was like I was hearing music and laughter and people so joyous. I just couldn't wait to get inside.

Then something happened. I heard a little boy crying. It was a deep sobbing sound, like a heart broken child gives, and I said to the person with me "I can't go until I find out what is wrong with that child." The sound of his grief was tearing me apart.

He said, "But it's time. I had instructions to bring you."

I was upset then. I heard such hard sobs I could not bear it. I said, "You go back to our Father and ask him if I can have a little more time. Ask Him if I have done any good thing in my life, that I could be granted this. I must comfort that child. I must find this boy and put my arms around him."

All at once I woke up and found myself being worked over again. They were giving me oxygen and trying to get me to breathe again. They said I'd passed out again, but I knew it was more than that. I know I was given extra time.

This happened three times. Each time it seemed like I was going to heaven. One time I could see a beautiful place and oh I did want to go in. I could see many of my relatives and they were so happy. But then I thought about that little boy crying, and I told the angel I wanted to go back.

My two friends didn't get out of the hospital. At least, they didn't come home again. So I was the only one who was lucky enough to get well. And I'm *so* appreciative, *so thankful,* for having extra time. I just can't explain it to you, but life is so full of wonderful things that I just feel like there's no time to waste on

sadness! I'm really glad to be here. I want all of you to enjoy it. It's too short to hold feelings, it's too short to be angry. It's too short for all the bad things—just enjoy the good things! Just appreciate each other. Be glad you've got each other.

I came home, but something special had happened to me. Now I knew for sure there is a Heaven. I knew for sure that there are angels and a Father in Heaven who loves me very much.

I dreamed one night[24] that I saw a young boy all dressed in white. He was in a circle of older men, all in white—they were very serious. The boy was saying, "I need some answers to my questions".

They seemed to understand and told him to ask and they'd try to help him. It was like I was an observer, standing by.

I thought to myself, "What is this? Is this the boy Jesus? I didn't think Jesus would have light colored hair." Most Jews I'd known had dark hair. I wondered why I was there and just who this boy was.

The next day Lawayne Grandlund called me on the phone. She mentioned it was too bad about the Richardson boy. Then she told me about it. I felt so bad. I hadn't heard. I got the paper and found his picture and read it. Then I cried. This was the boy I had seen in my dream the night before. I wanted to tell someone. I knew my husband wouldn't understand. I felt like I just had to reach out to someone and say "This boy is all right. Please don't grieve over him. I know he is okay."

24 In a letter dated May 17, 1989, Leola writes, "I dreamed the other night that I saw a young boy..."

It is too bad that it happened. It's too bad someone didn't realize in time to get to him, to talk to him.

A long time ago I had a cousin I thought a lot of—who died in a tragic way. I couldn't get him off of my mind. I really grieved and asked "why" over and over in my prayers.

One night, soon after I felt his presence in my room. I can't explain why I knew. I couldn't see him, but it was like he cleared his throat or made a slight noise to attract me and I said "Max, what is it?"

I knew he was there. He said in his tone of voice. and in his own way of speaking. "It's my Mom, will you please tell her it wasn't her fault."

I said, "sure."

I wanted to ask him more, but he was gone. I wouldn't dare write this if it hadn't been this way. Later I did tell his Mom and It was a comfort to her. I asked her not to talk about it. I felt like it was sacred. She's gone, too now. I never did know "why," but after that I didn't grieve anymore.

The saddest words of tongue or pen, are these four words, "It might have been."

I never realized how true they were, until late in life[25]. There are so many things I didn't have time for anymore. Oh, I'm glad I have eternity to live in. I'll need it! Once I thought I could do everything. Now I know I can't. So which things shall I leave unfinished?

25 From Leola's journal, March 24, 1988. In her journal, she said, "...how true they were, until now. There are so many things I don't have time for now."

My 2 main goals—a husband and family, I was fortunate enough to gain. But oh the personal goals I sacrificed. The sad part is, I could have done more. I realize now. A lot of the wasted time was my management of time. I thought I'd live forever. Couldn't ever visualize myself "Old."

I had a strange dream early one morning. I'd received a letter in the mail. It was hard for me to read, so I laid it down. Later, Kay came by, saw the letter, and began to read from it (to himself). He looked up once and there were tears in his eyes. He said, "Did you write these words?"

There seemed to be a collection of quotes from my writings included. I said "Yes, I suppose I did." He said, "These are just plain beautiful." I couldn't believe that ordinary writing of mine could affect him so emotionally... I wonder why?

One night I dreamed a dream so sweet I did not want to waken, and even after I did waken, I tried to recapture the feeling.

The two of us (Merrill and I) were riding in a little coupe car similar to the one we had when we were first married. We were so young and full of dreams, and as we traveled along, we were singing a song. The harmony between us blended and was so sweet, and suddenly it was as if another voice joined with our voices, and this made the sound even more beautiful. Do you know what we were singing? It was something about having a house down in the little green valley...

LITTLE GREEN VALLEY
(written by Carson Robison)

I see a candle light down in the little green valley,
Where mornin' glory vines are twinin' 'round my door.
Oh, how I wish I were there again, down in the little green valley.
That's where my homesick heart will trouble me no more.

There's only one thing ever gives me consolation,
And that's the thought that I'll be going back some day,
And every night down upon my knees, I pray the Lord to please take me
Back to that little old green valley, far away.

I hear a mockingbird down in the little green valley.
He's singing out a song of welcome just for me,
And someone waits by the garden gate down in the little green valley.
When I get back again, how happy she will be.

And by a little babbling brook once more we'll wander,
And in a shady nook we'll dream the hours away,
And I will leave all my cares behind, go where I know I'll find sunshine,
Back to that little old green valley, far away.

...and there is one thing that always brings me consolation. It's to know that I'll be going back some day, to that valley far away.

Why do you suppose I'd have such a precious dream as that, and why did it ever have to end? Maybe it was to remind me that such things are still possible. Maybe even as we get older we still need our dream just as we did when we were younger and couldn't have everything we wanted. We were young enough then that there were lots of tomorrow ahead of us, and it was so easy to look forward to a brighter day. So we'd sing about it, and we'd dream our dreams... and it did help to make us happier. Many times when we were singing, I imagined the angels joined with us, because they could see how happy we were and they wanted to be part of this experience, and so they joined in our song.

We are older now, and there are not so many tomorrows ahead of us, and it is not so easy to dream of what can be, because in our hearts we know some of the happiest times are over and can never be again—not in this life, anyhow. Never again will I feel the perfect health I once had, and the joy of running and climbing and being physically fit. Nor will I ever again in this life know the joy of carrying a child, or of letting one get his food from me. This part of my life ended long ago, but the feeling of loss never ended. The only compensation I ever felt, to help me endure such sorrow, was the joy of holding the babies of other women, especially when these were my own grandchildren. I love them so much, and I think, "How wonderful it is that I could pass on this "torch of life," and another can carry it on, and there can be other mothers bearing children because I once bore her, or helped to give her life. If I hadn't had this child, she wouldn't be here to have her child. So in a way, I am still part of the process of creation, and not just a "has been" that is cast aside with no one

to care except my own companion. And if I lost him first, who would there be to care? It doesn't seem to matter that the child's father was my son, or my daughter, or the companion each chose, they are equally dear, and so are their children.

So why the dream? Maybe it is the depressing part of Christmas that got to me. We don't like to talk about it, but there are lonely people at this time of year. They are lonely for the homes of their childhood, and for all the dear ones who have gone on ahead, for all the simple joys that used to be. In our memories we try to blot out the unpleasant things, like being cold, or not getting what we had our heart se on for Christmas. We tend to remember only the love we felt, the security of having someone to take care of us, the joy in a home where all the commercialism and noise and pleas for help were all shut out. We were loved and that is all that seemed to matter. Is it really so different today?

I will buy a few gifts that will cost too much, and I have the choice of feeling happy because I have the privilege of bringing a surprise and joy to someone who receives my gift. Or I have the choice of grumbling and complaining until all the joy of giving evaporates and I am left with the taste of bitterness in my mouth, for like in the story of the Vision of Sir Lawnfall, "The gift without the giver is bare." And it goes on to say, "He gives of himself serves three, himself, his hungering neighbor, and me." And of course that was the Lord speaking.

To give for the sheer joy of wanting to please someone is one thing. To give because it is the expected thing to do, or because you feel obligated, is less joyful. To give lovingly and without considering too much the cost of it, that is more satisfying.

Of course a person needs to be a bit practical, and no one minds that, but must each single penny be counted? Must one always put the person and the gift on a pair of scales to see if they balance properly? Must one always say, "Next year I will be able to give the gifts I really want to give?" After a while you know the years are numbered and you won't always have the opportunity for giving. Maybe this will be your own very last Christmas. One never knows. Life is so uncertain. It may be the last Christmas of someone very dear to you. It may be your last chance to tell that person how much they mean to you, and maybe next year there will be no reason to spend any money on a gift for that person, not even a card, because he won't be anywhere that the mail can find. At my age, there are many friends you don't send cards to anymore.

So you sing a happy song for the joys you do have, and for all the joys still ahead.

Chapter 66: Garden of Eden

I can't believe how little ones run to me. So glad to see their grandma. It is hard to even write about it. My joy was like a cup running over. I cannot write about it. It was too deep.

I *still* miss my little ones. I'd borrow some if only Merrill enjoyed them like I do[26]. Maybe it is a sort of escape for me—or maybe I will always be a child inside. Always interested in what is going on, and why things work or act the way they do. I was born with such a curiosity about life.

I feel like my heart is breaking and there's no way I can explain it. My babes are all grown and gone. The tears stream from both eyes. Nothing can seem to cheer me. I feel so suddenly alone. They are all such good children. How was I ever found worthy enough to have these precious ones as my own, and why didn't I realize sooner how great my opportunity was? I truly loved each one, but did I ever let them know how much I valued them? Did I ever let them know how much I believed in them?

26 This was from a journal entry 4 January 1990

And now I have the love of their children – oh how dear each child is. How special in his or her own way, each grandchild. And how can I let them know how dearly I love each one? Each has such great potential. I can feel it. I know it.

So soon I must leave them. There is so little time. No wonder the tears fall and I pray again for just a little more time. How can I ever leave?

If I could leave one message, it would be this: love one another. Each day do the best you can with that day, not worrying too much about past mistakes—just using them to do better.

Never be too busy to enjoy.

Springtime—the magic time I love so much. I'll walk again on green grass and I'll see my Tulips and daffodils, all the early flowers. My heart will dance with them, and I'll feel the joy in my throat and voice—a person just has to sing in springtime. Skies will be blue with warm, warm sunshine everywhere, turning things green. Is there a lovelier sight than new leaves on a tree, or blossoms pink and white? Birds will sing, and suddenly everything will be new.

And oh, the thrill of it, everywhere I look! Children will be happier, skipping along together, chattering, full of enthusiasm. I will remember how it feels, hurrying home from school, anxious to play outside. I will remember too, how I met my true love on such a day—all the times we ran together hand in hand. Or the times, like now, when we had to be a little quieter, but always we enjoyed springtime together. Always we marveled at the wonder

of new life and new joy that we could share. It was always a Garden of Eden for the two of us.

Of course we loved our children. We were always glad we had them. It was just that we had our own private Eden where no one else could enter. It all started on a day in Spring. Each year, it's like the miracle happening again—winter's cares and cold—and worries, left behind, and the beauty of springtime, like love, changing everything.

A person never knows quite what their children will want to hear about their parent's lives. I hope these few things will be interesting to them.

I dearly love the Lord and I'm glad I can help in His work. I have received so many blessings but the most precious of all is my husband and our children. We love them and we are proud of them. Life can be hard and full of problems, but if you love each other and put your trust in the Lord, problems can be overcome and progress can go on. We have had a good life, in spite of some hardships. We've had much joy with our children.

"I wish I had time to write a book," Leola once penned. "Of course, no one would believe it actually happened." But those who knew her can attest to the daily miracles that came from her gift for touching lives, blessing her family, and generally making the world a more beautiful, inspiring place.

Leola was a writer. Perhaps even she herself had no idea how many words she put to paper. From her vast collection of writings, notebooks, journals, letters, and recordings, the tapestry of her life is woven together, and now many of those words have been collected into a book representing her autobiography. With the exception of minor grammatical, spelling, tense corrections, and the foreword, this collection is composed entirely of her own words.